the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 23, 2006 $3.95

HOW BAD WILL IT BE?
FRED BARNES

GOVERNOR KINKY?

MATT LABASH on the campaign trail in Texas

PLUS

REUEL MARC GERECHT on Iraq and Jihad

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Some say depression is all in your head. Well, that's right. And wrong. It's right because depression is in the head, or more precisely, the brain. In fact, we've seen how it destroys the connections between brain cells.

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But saying depression is all in your head is also wrong. There's nothing imaginary about depression. It's a serious, medical condition that affects every aspect of a person's health. And untreated depression kills thousands of Americans a year — through suicide and by intensifying the symptoms of life threatening illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

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[Dr. Paul Greengard 2000 Nobel Laureate in Medicine]

"Every year, without any treatment at all, thousands stop suffering from depression. Because it kills them."

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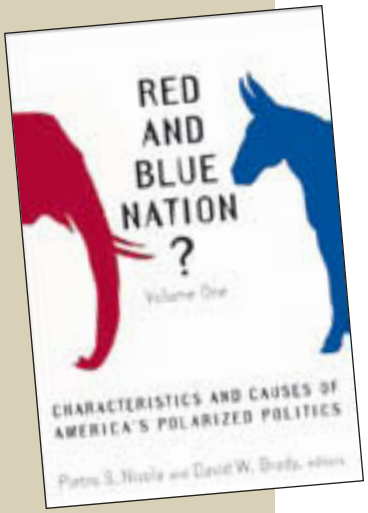
Critical Readings from Hoover Institution Fellows

Red and Blue Nation?

Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics

EDITED BY PIETRO S. NIVOLA AND DAVID W. BRADY



Analysts and pundits increasingly perceive a widening gulf between "red states" and "blue states." Yet the research to support that perception is scattered and sometimes difficult to parse. America's polarized politics, it is said, poses fundamental dangers for democratic and accountable government. Heightened partisanship is thought to degrade deliberation in Congress and threaten the integrity of other institutions, from the courts to the media. But how deep do the country's political divisions actually run? Are they truly wreaking havoc upon the social fabric? Has America become a house divided? This important new book, *Red and Blue Nation?* gets to the bottom of this perplexing issue.

The first of two volumes cosponsored by Brookings and the Hoover Institution carefully considers the extent to which polarized views among political leaders and activists are reflected in the population at large.

In *Red and Blue Nation?* leading journalists and scholars combine their different insights to enrich our understanding of the issue, offering thoughtful analyses of the underlying problems. This comprehensive and accessible discussion of the polarization debate will be an essential resource for policymakers, scholars, and anyone interested in the health of American public discourse.

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December 2006
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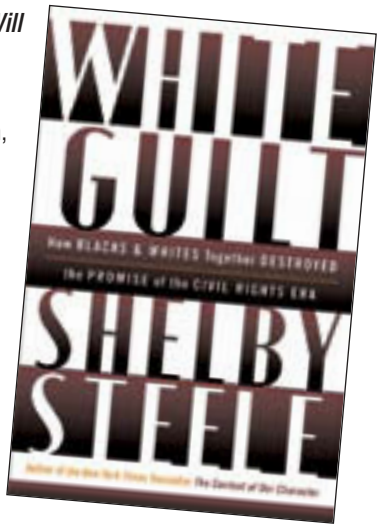
1-800-537-5487

White Guilt

How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era

SHELBY STEELE

"Shelby Steele is America's clearest thinker about America's most difficult problem."
— George F. Will



In 1955 the murderers of Emmett Till, a black Mississippi youth, were acquitted of their crime, undoubtedly because they were white. Forty years later, O. J. Simpson, whom many thought would be found guilty of murder by virtue of the DNA evidence against him, went free after his attorney portrayed him as a victim of racism. Clearly, a sea change has taken place in American culture, but how did it happen? In this important new work, distinguished race relations scholar Shelby Steele argues that the age of white supremacy has given way to an age of white guilt—and neither that has been good for African Americans.

Shelby Steele is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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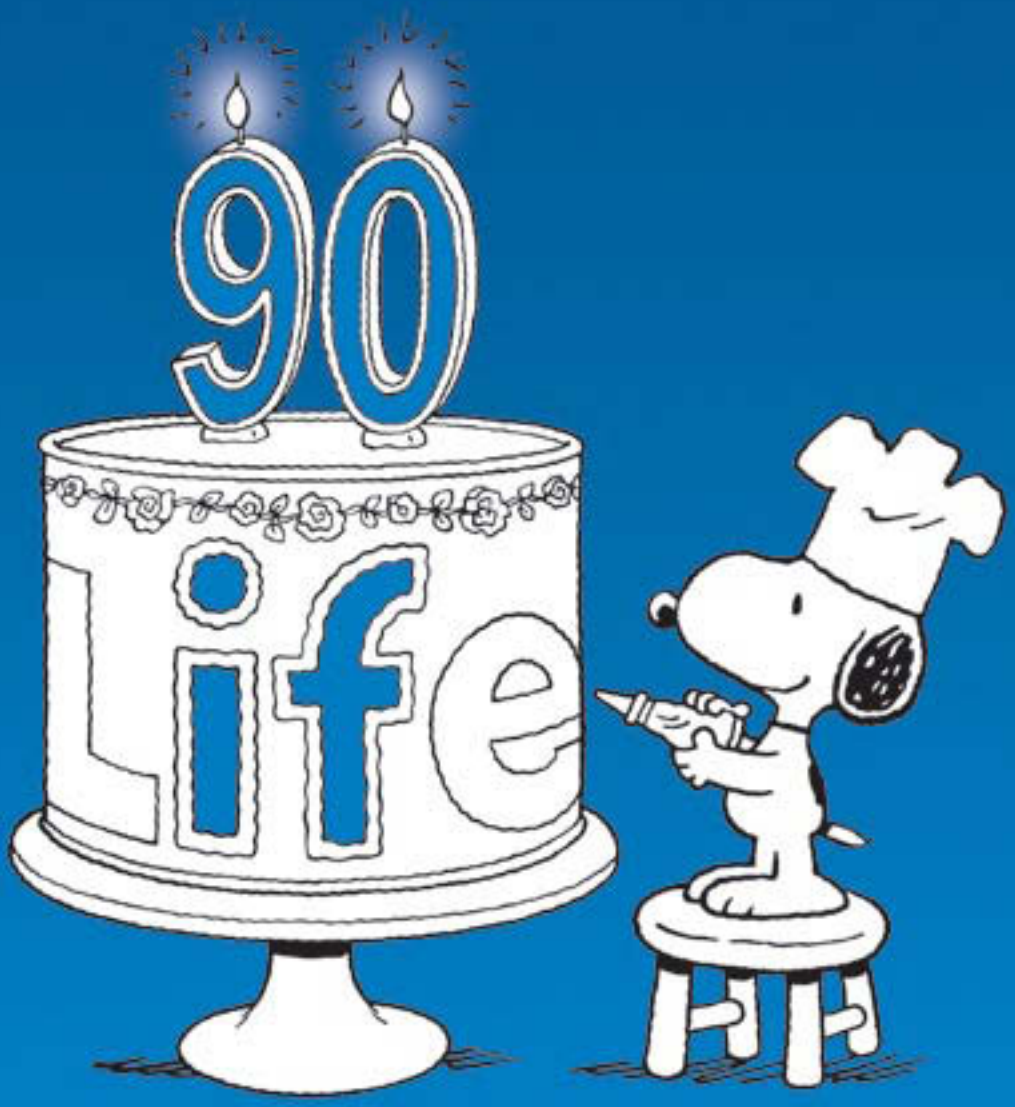

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Our Library Overfloweth

The Scrapbook is exhausted. It always looks forward, with special pleasure and quasi-parental pride, to reading new books by Weekly Standard contributing editors, frequent contributors, and special friends. But this fall has brought a bumper crop. There are so many—and they're so gripping—that The Scrapbook has been running short on time for sleep. The rest of you, though, can feel free to spread your reading out over a couple of months, or more. This week, The Scrapbook confines itself to noting the new history and war books by its colleagues; next week (we're not all politics and war, after all), the other worthies.

From contributing editor Robert Kagan: *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. A gripping history of American foreign policy (the first of two volumes), it provides a genuinely fresh account of that history—decisively refuting the conventional view of an isolationist past, and showing how deeply embedded in American history and the DNA of the American regime is a policy of ambitiously promoting liberal democracy. This will come to be seen—trust us—as a major work in the study of U.S. history and the sources of U.S. foreign policy.

From contributing editor Frederick W. Kagan: Two (!) hefty volumes, each essential for scholars and experts in the relevant fields, but also of general interest. First, *The End of the Old Order: Napoleon and Europe, 1801-1805*, the first installment of a four-volume study of Napoleon and Europe. And second, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy*, which provides essential background to the current debates over military transformation. If only Donald Rumsfeld had read this . . .

And speaking of Kagans: Don't neglect *The Eye of Command* by Kimberly Kagan, ancient historian and an occasional contributor to these pages. Based on her study of Roman military authors, Kagan demonstrates that the commander's view of a battle is fundamental to understanding its shape and outcome, thereby providing an important corrective to the grunt's-eye approach to military history popularized by John Keegan in his *Face of Battle*.

And speaking of war: contributing editor Max Boot's magisterial *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* has just been released. John McCain blurbed it as "sweeping and erudite, while entirely accessible to the lay reader." We couldn't agree more.

Buy them all. Read them. Persuade others to read them. And give them as gifts (they're all uncommonly handsome). ♦

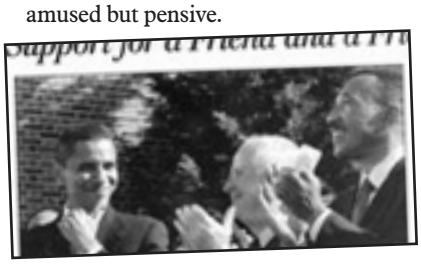
It's Raining Obamas

A tip of The Scrapbook's homburg to Thomas Frye of Laytonsville, Md., for the funniest—and most perceptive—letter to the editor of the *Washington Post* in recent memory. We've illustrated it with scans of the photos to which he refers.

Is He the Post's Candidate?

Good morning, boys and girls! Today [Sept. 28] we're going to show you Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.).

On Page B2, see Obama looking amused but pensive.



On Page C1, see Obama smile. See how friendly he is?

On Page C2, see Obama looking serious. That shows us that he cares.

Also on C2, see Obama with a pretty girl. Don't you think Obama is

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good-looking, too? The *Post* really likes Obama. Can you tell?

—Thomas Frye
Laytonsville

'Shotty' Research

It's election season, so the English medical journal *The Lancet*, as it did two years ago, has released a purportedly scientific analysis of the deaths caused by the coalition in Iraq, during and since the war. The death toll they allege—upwards of 600,000—is not given credence outside the ranks of those who, like the editor of *The Lancet* himself, shout themselves hoarse at antiwar rallies over the depredations of the "axis of Anglo-American imperialism."

The Scrapbook's favorite debunking, both substantively and because it contained an inspired neologism (we refuse to believe it was a misspelling), came from a blogging M.D. known as "Medpundit."

> The researchers spent two months canvassing households in various regions of Iraq asking about deaths in the family. Sometimes they were able to confirm the reports with death certificates, sometimes they weren't. They didn't ask if the dead were combatants or non-combatants. They were afraid to ask that question. Afraid for themselves and for those they were asking. They interviewed 40 households in each of their selected regions, then extrapolated the 600,000 figure from the number of deaths they had recorded in their interviews. The margin of error of +/-200,000 speaks for itself. It's not reliable.
>
> And sorry, but the defense that it's as soundly designed as can be expected for these kinds of public health surveys is a weak one. Retrospective, interview-based studies like this are poor designs. It may be the standard way of gathering data in the public health field, but that doesn't make it the best methodology, and it certainly doesn't make its statistics sound. For too long the field of public health has relied on these types of shotty numbers to influence public policy, whether it's the number of people who die from secondhand smoke or the number who die from eating the wrong kinds of cooking oils.

In a word—a word that brilliantly combines *shoddy* and the barnyard expletive such hit jobs masquerading as science deserve—it's a shotty piece of work. ♦

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The Weekly Standard is seeking an advertising account executive who will sell pages in the magazine and space on our website, *weeklystandard.com*, and in our weekly email newsletter. This person will manage our online sales effort and be an essential part of our ad sales team, which includes representatives in Chicago, San Francisco, and Toronto. Top candidates for this position will be personable, reliable, organized, and—not least—love the thrill of closing a sale! If you think you are up to the challenge of this job, email a cover letter with resume to Associate Publisher Peter Dunn, *pdunn@weeklystandard.com*. ♦

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Casual

Dan the Durd

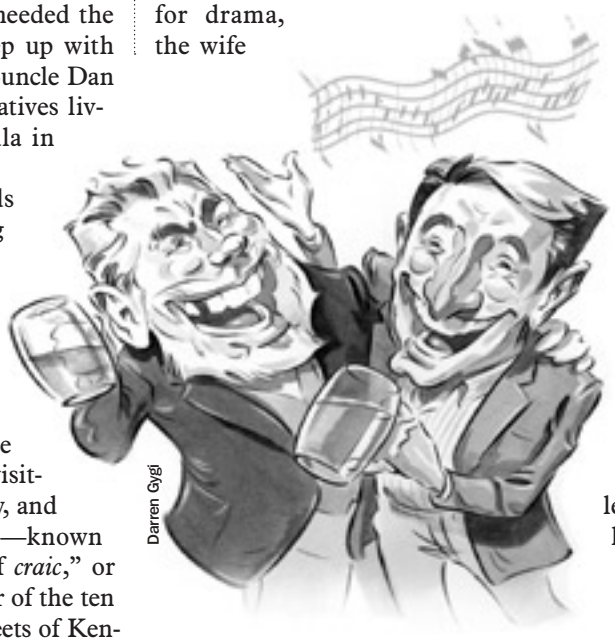
On a trip to Ireland last month, I began every morning with a dose of whiskey before enjoying some great crack during the day. Don't be alarmed, though: The whiskey was mixed in my porridge, along with some cream—a legitimate Irish delicacy—and "crack" (actually spelled *craic*) is Irish for good company and conversation. I needed the whiskey boost just to keep up with the *craic* of my great-great-uncle Dan O'Shea, the last of my relatives living on the Beara Peninsula in County Kerry.

A mystique surrounds my seventy-something great-great-uncle, thanks in part to the moniker given him by local tradition, Dan the Durd. It's a title of disputed origin that distinguishes Dan's clan from others like the Shoemaker O'Sheas. I've visited Ireland a few times now, and whenever I go, the Durd—known for miles as a "bringer of *craic*," or simply a *craic*—leads a tour of the ten pubs found on the two streets of Kenmare-town. As he goes, the people we pass shout, "Up the Durd!" and when Irish women are among them, Dan, like a true *craic*, smiles and says, "Ah, now, aren't there lovely young girls here?"

With a glass of Bushmills Blackbush in his right hand, his cane in his left, the Durd holds court, first at the "least classy" bar and finally at the modern Coachman pub, a picture of the newly prosperous Ireland. The Durd introduces me everywhere as an "American cousin." Soon a curious, talkative crowd surrounds me, and the storytelling and trading of jabs begins.

The Durd is fond of telling the ubiquitous American tourists about his oldest brother, my great grandfather, who left for America at age 22 and didn't see his mother again for 40 years, by which time his father and some siblings he'd never met were already dead.

Once, when a Boston couple heard Dan tell this story, his rhythmic brogue laid on thick for drama, the wife was moved to tears. But the Durd always finishes with humor. As he tells it, Dan let his long-absent brother and his sister-in-law stay in his bedroom, while he occupied a sleeping bag under the stairs. Now, his brother was fond of an occasional whiskey but wary of publicity, and one night he tiptoed through the house looking for a bottle, with no luck. Finally, he peeked under the stairs. Seeing only Dan's wide open eyes, he jumped, and dashed back to his room in fear. "Oh, Lord," says Dan. "He thought he had seen the Banshee!"


Darren Gygi

One night during my recent trip, at Crowley's pub, Dan met a couple from Wisconsin. "Susie," the man exclaimed to his wife, "this man *is* Ireland! I am going to buy a whiskey for a real Irishman. A Blackbush for the Durd!" His wife, fearing that Dan's *craic* would keep her husband at the bar until the closing bell, soon hustled him out. But it was too bad they left, for they missed one of the trademarks of *craic*—a *seisiún*, or spontaneous singing and music.

"Quiet!" shouted the woman behind the bar, "Someone has a song." Then, from the silence came the deep, doleful voice of an old-timer hunched over the bar, the Guinness foam still fresh around his mouth. *Well, I woke up Sunday morning / With no way to hold my head that didn't hurt. / And the beer I had for breakfast wasn't bad / So I had one more for dessert.* Some well-lubricated throats tried to sing along, but protests quickly sent them into silent reflection, as the man continued his stirring, adagio rendition of the tune made famous by Johnny Cash. *And somewhere far away a lonely bell was ringing / And it echoed through the canyon like the disappearing dreams of yesterday.*

The man's singing made me think of the ruined 12th-century church I'd seen that day, its roofless remains overlooking a graveyard long lost to overgrowth and peat. It was an eerie meeting of old and new, of struggle and hope. There we sat in prosperous Ireland, foreigner and local alike enjoying cool pints of stout and good company, listening to the voice of a proud but severe past.

As the Durd would say, "Irish fairies are not your American fairies"—far from it: Those cruel, unpredictable cousins of the Banshee were the reason I was always given a flashlight before walking the hills at night—"and Irish *craic* is not your American crack." If you doubt it, take it up with the man himself when you find yourself in Kenmare. While you're at it, be a good *craic*: Buy a round of Blackbush for Dan the Durd.

Joseph Lindsley

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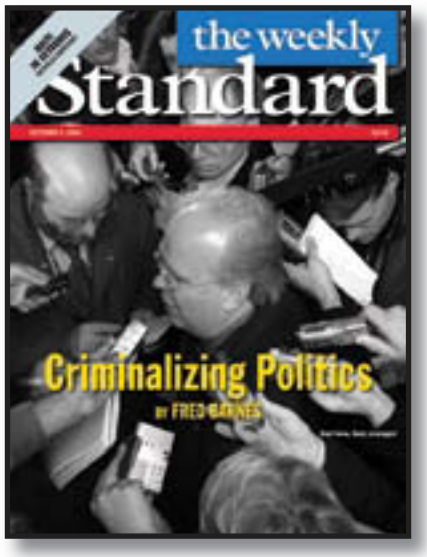
Another Side of Dylan

Sean Curnyn writes that "while the music of peers like Young and Springsteen is probably destined for artifact status as the decades pass by, [Bob] Dylan's seems likely to continue provoking consideration well into the future" ("What Dylan Is Not," Oct. 2). I remain unconvinced. Some of Young's and Springsteen's songs are, indeed, time capsules—and so are many of Dylan's. In general, Dylan's moldiest stuff is his early protest material and his many lapses into musical and lyrical laziness down through the years since his famous motorcycle accident.

Springsteen has become an ideologue and a shill, granted, but so far his politics haven't turned up in his songwriting. And he's still a perfectionist craftsman: Hemingway to Dylan's Kerouac. Five hundred years from now an anthropologist could listen carefully to the six-album song cycle from *Born to Run* through *Tunnel of Love* and not only prepare a deep and nuanced snapshot of the American heart, but also Exhibit A demonstrating the timelessness of the human condition. Certainly Dylan has dealt with eye-on-eternity themes all along, but so much of what he's written has been incomprehensible stream-of-consciousness Beat writing that it won't offer many clues to what the hell was going on in his mind, much less in his time and place.

Not all of it, mind you. But a lot of it. In fact, I'll take it one step further. A good gob of Dylan's *oeuvre* shows how far an artistically minded individual with a restless and fluid imagination can go on an outsider's sense of being equal parts alienated and above it all. Add in an audacious attitude, a rhyming dictionary, and a singing voice that's so un-singerly and anti-melodic that it cannot be categorized, and, evidently, you can persuade people you must be saying something terribly urgent, prophetic, and profound every time you open your mouth.

Don't get me wrong. I love Dylan. He's a singular talent and a wizard of wordplay. But I detest his canonization. For there's as much the crafty medicine man in Bob Dylan as there is the dogged blue-collar poseur in Bruce Springsteen. Every popular-music star



has an act; every one has a shtick or at least a performance persona. These two are no exceptions. This doesn't mean either hasn't composed brilliant works. Both have. Neil Young, too. But in the pop cosmos, Dylan alone, that sly shape-changing manipulator of perceptions and misperceptions—a man and an artist who, by the genius of his evasions, abstractions, and obfuscations, forced us to define him precisely by "what he is not"—has worked his way into being seen in the same literary league as Dante, Shakespeare, and Dostoyevsky. And into being claimed by both political conservatives and liberals as, underneath it all, "one of ours." I think both those notions are ridiculous. I think Dylan would agree.

David Pearson
North Branford, Conn.

Terror and the Law

I am unimpressed by Richard Posner's recent efforts, particularly those emphasized in Peter Berkowitz's review of his latest book ("Freedom at War," Sept. 18). I see nothing novel in Posner's balancing test for assessing responses to a terrorist threat. Who would argue with the idea that evaluating the constitutionality of such responses must involve balancing the severity of the threat and the competing liberties at stake?

I object most strongly to the notions, implicit or explicit, that: (1) the jihadist threat is so novel as to warrant rethinking our most cherished principles; (2) arcane distinctions about whether terrorists wear uniforms, carry weapons openly, or sound their approach with bugles should influence how we treat them when captured; (3) where suspected terrorists are captured or held should determine whether we can torture suspected terrorists or not; and (4) less codification of interrogation procedures, and not clearer guidance, is the answer to the horrors wrought at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay. Cloak these judgments however you like, in constitutional rhetoric or otherwise, but I will continue to find them horrendously mistaken.

Mark Solomon
New York, N.Y.

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DON'T LET AMERICA'S STEELWORKERS GET RUN OVER BY THE AUTO COMPANIES.

The U.S. auto industry is pushing to remove antidumping orders on unfairly traded foreign steel. And they don't care if American manufacturing and American jobs suffer as a result.

The reason antidumping orders were enacted in the first place was to prevent foreign companies from cheating. As a June 2006 U.S. Department of Commerce report states, a revocation of current antidumping orders would likely lead to a resumption of dumping of foreign steel into the U.S. at unfair trade margins of between 10 to 36 percent.

Automakers say American-made steel is priced artificially high, but the truth is, many customers pay more for the stereo in a car than the corrosion-resistant steel used to make the vehicle itself.

But still, car manufacturers want to open the floodgates and reward global cheating by letting government-subsidized and dumped foreign steel pour in. That may be good for Wall Street, but it puts American jobs at risk and it's bad for our communities.

Car manufacturers should abide by the rules and play fair, not drive American manufacturing into the ground.

Support fair trade. Support American workers. Enforce America's fair trade laws.

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the weekly Standard

Huffing and Puffing

On October 11, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke—and it became clear just how bad things are. Interviewed by the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s Debra Saunders, Rice praised the U.N. Security Council for "a good year":

> In the month of July it got a resolution on Iran and a resolution on the North Korean missile test. It's about to get a resolution on the North Korean nuclear test. It ended a war in Lebanon, not without a lot of American involvement in actually putting together the cease-fire. But the international community has put together a resolution on Darfur to get troops into Darfur. So we're doing better in the Security Council.

So we are. But we're not doing better in the real world. Each of these resolutions (except possibly Lebanon) has been ineffectual. None has stopped bad behavior or punished the guilty. North Korea is crossing "red lines" with virtual impunity. Iran's nuclear program is chugging ahead. Hezbollah retains its arms. Sudan is committing genocide. All the activity in the Security Council can't mask our weakness. And the rogue states aren't fooled. It's been a "good year"—except we're losing and dangers are increasing.

Later that day, Rumsfeld spoke at the Pentagon:

> Tomorrow will mark the sixth anniversary of a terrorist attack that killed 17 U.S. sailors aboard the USS *Cole*. That attack, which was really less than a year before the September 11, 2001, attacks, was a fresh demonstration to the world of the dangers that are posed by violent extremists. Those dangers would be amplified geometrically should terrorists be able to obtain weapons of mass destruction.
>
> In recent days, the world's been concerned as North Korea announced a test of its nuclear capability, having previously announced that they had nuclear weapons. And we've also seen Iran continue with its nuclear program over the objections of much of the international community. Seeing Iran and North Korea on a path towards nuclear weapons brings up several issues of concern.
>
> First, those nations are known proliferators. They've proliferated to other nation-states as well as to non-nation entities. We recently saw an example of the latter in the case of Iran supplying Hezbollah.
>
> Second, their programs point to increasing risks of lethal weapons possibly ending up in the hands of non-state entities, folks that, unlike a nation, tend not to be deterred the way a nation-state would because they don't have to worry about protecting real estate, population, and leadership.
>
> Another concern is that as a result of these trends, it's possible at least that some other nations in the world might decide that they can no longer avoid developing their own nuclear weapons. If this trend continues, there would be an increase in the number of countries with nuclear weapons, not just Iran and Korea, but possibly others. The nuclear threshold as a result would be lower in the years ahead.

Rumsfeld is gloomier than Rice. His is a somber picture. But on the sixth anniversary of the attack on the USS *Cole*, what are we doing about these threats and trends? Here is the rest of Rumsfeld's statement:

> Now, none of those outcomes are in the interests of the international community. I mention that because obviously it points out the critical importance of cooperation among the international community. The task is to marshal sufficient leverage so that Iran and North Korea and other countries can be dissuaded from their current course.
>
> Clearly, it's a problem that no one country is able to deal with alone. Like counternarcotics, proliferation—it requires the cooperation of a great many countries, and this, of course, is the path that President Bush is on. It's the right course, and the task is to marshal that support from the international community.

So the lesson Rumsfeld takes from the USS *Cole*, and all that's happened since, is this: We're dependent on "the international community," and we need to cooperate with others.

The difference between the Bush administration and its Democratic critics now amounts to six-party talks or two-party talks with North Korea—as if talking would stop Kim Jong Il. It turns on direct or indirect negotiations with Ahmadinejad—as if he were willing to negotiate away his nuclear program. With the exception of Bush's commendable steadfastness in Iraq—combined, however, with debilitating stubbornness on troop levels and strategy—and his support for Israel, Bush's foreign policy is now Clintonian in its combination of weakness and wishful thinking. The result in the 1990s was fecklessness and failure in Rwanda and Afghanistan and North Korea and the Middle East. The price will be even greater today.

Bush has two more years. Whatever happens in November's elections, the country cannot afford his all-U.N.-all-the-time defensive crouch. It is not too late to increase the size of the military; to work with Japan, rather than kowtowing to China, on North Korea; to institute an interdiction regime around that country; to act with a coalition of the willing to bomb airfields and aircraft assisting genocide in Sudan; to help the democrats in and near Russia; to insist on real sanctions and pressure on Iran, backed by the threat of force; and generally to stop huffing and puffing about what is unacceptable and intolerable—only to then accept the unacceptable and tolerate the intolerable. But it is getting late.

—*William Kristol*

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How Bad Will It Be?

The GOP debacle to come.

BY FRED BARNES

REPUBLICANS and conservatives, brace yourselves! Strategists and consultants of both parties now believe the House is lost and House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi will become speaker. At best, Republicans will cling to control of the Senate by a single seat, two at most. For many election cycles, Republicans have been the boys of October, using paid media and superior campaign skills to make up lost ground and win in November. This year, they were the boys of September, rallying strongly until that fateful day, September 29, when the Mark Foley scandal erupted. October has been a disaster so far. A strong finishing kick for Republicans, minimizing Democratic gains, is possible. They pulled one off brilliantly in President Bush's first midterm election in 2002. But recovery will be harder this time, a lot harder.

The press is fixated on the so-called generic ballot—Do you want a Democratic or Republican Congress?—as an indicator of Republican setbacks on November 7. But that gauge has rarely been predictive. Two others are more reliable: presidential approval and party enthusiasm. And they tell an ominous story for Republicans about the difference between 2002 and 2006.

Presidential approval correlates with how the president's party fares in midterm elections. It's simple: High approval is linked to election success, low approval to defeat. In October 2002, with Bush's approval at 62 percent in the Gallup Poll, Republicans won six seats in the House and two in the Senate. Now Bush is at 37 percent in Gallup. The inescapable conclusion is that Bush lacks the clout with the public he had four years ago. To make matters worse, presidents associated with unpopular wars are historically a drag on their parties (Truman, LBJ).

The most overlooked election indicator is the level of voter enthusiasm. In every election from 1994 through 2004, Republicans were more enthusiastic than Democrats. That was a decade of Republican growth. This year Democrats are more excited. And it's measurable. In 2002, 42 percent of Republicans said they were more enthusiastic than usual about the election. Thirty-eight percent of Democrats said the same. In 2006, the numbers have flipped. Republican enthusiasm has dipped to 39 percent and Democratic enthusiasm has jumped to 48 percent. Enthusiasm affects turnout. Gloomy voters are less inclined to vote.

The Foley scandal did two things, both harmful to Republicans. It stopped Republican momentum in its tracks. (Also contributing to this were the negative spin on Iraq from Bob Woodward's book *State of Denial* and the faulty reporting on the National Intelligence Estimate.) And it changed the narrative of the campaign from one emphasizing national security, a Republican strength, to one emphasizing Republican malfeasance in Washington and dysfunction in Iraq.

Democrats were lucky, as they have been all year. They had fallen into a trap set by Republicans on the interrogation of high-level terrorist detainees. They voted against the compromise reached by the White House and Senator John McCain, choosing to protect civil liberties for terrorists over national security. That issue, a powerful one for Republicans, was pushed aside in the Foley frenzy.

Earlier in 2006, events had intervened to snuff out a recovery by Bush and Republicans in its embryonic stage. After a bumpy 2005 (Katrina, rising Iraq violence, failure of Social Security reform, Harriet Miers), Bush's approval was inching upward, pointing to an end to his second-term slump. Instead, Vice President Cheney's accidental shooting of a hunting pal, the Dubai ports fiasco, and the bombing of the Golden Dome mosque in Iraq combined to prolong the slump—until the short-lived September surge.

If politics were fair, Democrats would be in as much trouble as Republicans. And they'd be just as vulnerable. They've been obstructionist, anti-tax-cut, soft on terrorism, and generally obnoxious. On top of that, Pelosi is the most unpopular national politician in America. But in the sixth year of the Bush presidency, with a GOP-run Congress, Democrats aren't the issue. Republicans are.

This explains why efforts by Bush and Republicans to target Democrats have been so unsuccessful. A veteran Republican consultant says lavish spending on TV commercials in races he's involved in has largely failed to either boost the poll numbers of his Republican candidates or drive down those of Democrats. Worse, in blue states, the Democratic crossover vote on which Republican candidates often rely has dried up. Democrats have gone home in droves.

In his stump speeches, the president concentrates on terror and taxes. And the contrast he draws

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between terror-fighting, tax-cutting Republicans and wimpy, taxaholic Democrats is reasonably accurate. But it's failing to attract independents or lure disgruntled conservatives back to the Republican fold.

Should Democrats capture the House, "they would raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money," Bush said at a rally in Chicago last week. "It's amazing what happens when you cut taxes. The economy grows [and] you end up with more tax revenues." On national security, he said, "If the security of the United States is the most important issue, then part of this issue is which party has been willing to step up and give those charged with protecting you the tools necessary to do so." He didn't need to identify which party has and which hasn't.

The problem here is that national security isn't the leading campaign issue. And saying it should be won't make it so. What's needed is an event—a big event—to crystallize the issue in a way that highlights Republican strength and Democratic weakness. It was two events—the foiled British terrorist plot and the need to comply with a Supreme Court decision on handling captured terrorists—that led to the Republican mini-rally in September.

Of course there's little time left for a major event to occur. The North Korean bomb test wasn't big enough to change the course of the campaign. So Republicans may have to rely on their two remaining assets: They have more money than the Democrats and a voter turnout operation second to none.

Despite their commanding position with the election only weeks away, Democrats are fearful of a last-minute Republican gambit. What if White House aide Karl Rove has arranged for the capture of Osama bin Laden so it can be announced a few days prior to November 7? Rove is clever, but not that clever. Which is why Republicans and conservatives need to prepare themselves for bad news on Election Night. ♦

The *New York Times* versus Religion

How much nonsense can be crammed into one four-part series? BY JOHN J. DIIULIO JR.

On Sunday, October 8, the "public editor" of the *New York Times*, Byron Calame, criticized *Times* reporter Linda Greenhouse for a speech she delivered last June at Harvard. Greenhouse, described by Calame as the paper's "much-honored Supreme Court reporter for 28 years," preached to the liberal choir in Cambridge about "law-free zones at Guantánamo Bay . . . the U.S. Congress, whatever," the government's "assault on women's reproductive freedom," and "the hijacking of public policy by religious fundamentalism." Writing on the op-ed page, Calame noted that, thanks to her "straightforward" reporting, Greenhouse begets few complaints to his office. But he gently reminded "the influential Supreme Court reporter" that she has "an overriding obligation to avoid publicly expressing these kinds of personal opinions." In reply to Calame, Greenhouse defended her Harvard remarks as "statements of fact" that would be allowed by the *Times* in a news article.

Indeed. On the very day that it slapped Greenhouse's wrist, the paper launched "In God's Name: Favors for the Faithful," a four-part series on religion in America. The story line: "Pervasively sectarian" religious organizations across America are now awash in federal funds and regulatory exemptions. Or, as Greenhouse might have put it, public policy has been hijacked by religious fundamentalism.

The research that went into the article was what Calame might call "straightforward." A *Times* "computer analysis" of post-1989 federal laws turned up "more than 200 provisions granting accommodations or protections specifically to religious groups." The ostensibly faith-favoring laws covered "topics from taxes to immigration to education." The article's subheading was "From Day Care Centers to Use of Land, Rules Don't Apply to Faith Groups."

The computer analysis turned up 22 "social services" religious exemptions, including one that the story highlighted, "the landmark 'Charitable Choice' provision in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996." Apparently, however, the "analysis" did not extend to actually reading the provision, parsing cognate regulations, or carefully examining how the relevant laws have been implemented or ignored.

The *Times* describes the laws as allowing "pervasively religious groups to get federal contracts to provide social services without altering their character or governance." Actually, the "Religious Organizations" section of the 1996 Charitable Choice provision explicitly stated that faith groups could "accept certificates, vouchers, or other forms of disbursement," but only "on the same basis as any other nongovernmental provider" and "without diminishing the religious freedom of beneficiaries of assistance funded under such program." By the same token, the 1996 federal law's "Limitations on Use of Funds for Certain Purposes" section specifically

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forbade any religious organization from expending any public funds "for sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization."

Besides, whatever federal legal "exemptions" faith-based organizations do enjoy might be trumped by state laws. As the 1996 provision explicitly stated, nothing in the federal law "shall be construed to preempt any provision of a State constitution or State statute that prohibits or restricts the expenditure of State funds in or by religious organizations."

Because most federal grants are administered via block grants to the states, because no adequate intergovernmental data systems exist to follow the money, and because state laws and regulations governing church-state collaboration vary, it is difficult to generalize meaningfully about government partnerships with religious nonprofits. Several state-by-state studies suggest that more state government contracts are being awarded to religious nonprofits that perform vital social services. But these grants are subject to often onerous state laws and regulations restricting the use of public funds for religious activities.

Times readers might be interested to know that most state constitutions single out "faith groups" for special legal burdens and restrictions. About two-thirds of state constitutions have a generic no public funding clause. And most have a specific no funding for religious education clause. As University of Chicago law scholar Philip Hamburger summarized in his book *Separation of Church and State*, many such antireligion state constitutional provisions have their political roots in rabidly anti-Catholic 19th-century nativist movements.

Accompanying the *Times* article was a photo of an African-American woman holding a child on her lap in a rocking chair. The woman runs child care centers in Alabama that "must comply with many laws and regulations" from which "religious organizations providing the same services have been exempted." The bold-lettered caption beneath the picture: "No Exemption Available."

The picture is worth a thousand biased words. The implication is that faith-based social service organizations are getting a big leg up on their secular counterparts. The truth is far more complicated. A radically different picture emerges from empirical studies about how faith-based organizations serve the urban minority poor.

The most important social service organizations in many low-income urban communities are black churches. In big-city America, black churches and their affiliated nonprofit groups lead other organizations, both secular *and* religious, in at least four ways: average levels of service provision to the needy; propensity to locate among and serve the most acutely needy populations; outreach to severely at-risk neighborhood youth and other nonmembers; and willingness to partner with other religious groups, secular organizations, and government agencies. Despite having zero public funds and little or no foundation support, black religious nonprofits tend to provide higher levels of many social services, including, but not limited to, education, health care, economic development, and, yes, child care.

Or consider the evidence on who serves the poor when it comes to scores of other social services including welfare-to-work programs. A multiyear study by Calvin College political scientist Stephen Monsma examined welfare-to-work programs in four big cities (Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles). In each city, the services were supplied via a mix of government agencies, for-profit firms, large secular nonprofits with professional staff, local secular groups with volunteer staff, and assorted religious congregations and grassroots religious nonprofits.

In Philadelphia, for example, the study found that about 40 percent of all organizations supplying the services were faith-based. To characterize them as "pervasively sectarian" would be silly since the vast majority served beneficiaries, recruited volunteers, and hired paid staff all without regard to religion. On average, across the four cities in the study, faith-based groups served about 200 clients on budgets of roughly $90,000 a year, while secular ones served about 400 clients, but on budgets of roughly $900,000 a year (twice the clients for ten times the money). The secular groups were much more likely to receive public money than the faith groups were, and their average government grants were significantly larger, too. The faith groups were also more likely to serve poor minority citizens who had the fewest years of formal schooling, the worst job histories, or both.

Faith-based federal politics and pandering is one thing, but what the federal government actually does vis-à-vis religious nonprofits is another. The most recent empirical study, by scholars at SUNY-Albany's Rockefeller Institute, suggests that, if anything, the amount of federal money going to religious nonprofits has declined over the last few years. There is more than one way to measure that flow, and I suspect that funding has actually increased somewhat. But whatever the funding trend, there is no evidence to indicate that politically conservative or "pervasively sectarian" groups have received special treatment or won more than their fair share of grants.

The second installment of "In God's Name" focused on 13 "workplace" provisions that the *Times* characterized as federal "favors for the faithful," which have the effect of "limiting workers' rights." Religious colleges, hospitals, and other organizations supposedly now enjoy *carte blanche* exemptions from employment laws and regulations, dramatizing how "American religious organizations benefit from an increasingly accommodating government."

Since 2001, President Bush has signed executive orders expanding the so-called ministerial exemption that, under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent federal laws, affords religious organizations a limited right to take religion into account in hiring.

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Simply stated, the right is absolute with respect to private funds and worship services, but restricted with respect to public funds and social services. In my view, the new executive orders were unnecessary; but regardless, they have proven toothless, and any efforts to enforce them or other federal "exemptions" would run headlong into contrary black-letter provisions in state constitutions and regulations. For every court decision and anecdote in the story indicating how "accommodating" government has become in employment and related matters, leaders of religious educational, health care, and other faith-based organizations could rattle off contrary decisions and horror stories indicating how adversarial government has been and remains.

Times readers might be invited to imagine an America in which all of those ostensibly favored faith groups disappeared tomorrow. Who would suffer the most, and who would have to pay to replace the social services that they now provide? For instance, pick ten big cities, and ask how many low-income non-Catholics (Title I students, Medicaid-eligible patients, etc.) are served by Catholic elementary schools, high schools, colleges or universities, and hospitals? Next, try to figure out who is subsidizing or "accommodating" whom: How much would it cost to provide the same services without religiously mobilized volunteers and institutions in the mix? Studies being conducted by me and others at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University aim to estimate the "replacement value" of such Catholic "civic assets." Stay tuned.

The *Times* also identified 37 "land use and property" laws adopted "to benefit or protect religious property owners." The "favors for the faithful" here included a law raising the criminal penalties for church-burning. More generally, the *Times*'s "analysis" somehow missed the fact that, at a time when more than 50 million Americans live in private homeowner associations (condominiums, cooperatives, gated communities), organized around myriad secular purposes including recreation, and legally afforded ownership restrictions (senior citizens only, no children), religion remains a widely "prohibited category" under federal housing laws.

Similarly, while federal funds finance much art and architecture that is patently offensive to many religious believers, and while federal dollars routinely pay to preserve other historically or architecturally significant properties, grand old churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious properties must go begging. Hurricane Katrina destroyed many sacred places frequented by religious people who were the first to supply basic services to the region's victims. Still, in 2005, Congress barely passed new legislation providing funding to Catholic and other religious schools that had selflessly opened their doors to elementary and secondary students who had been displaced by the floods.

And, as I know from my own travels, in many cities, faith groups that seek to open after-school programs, run shelters, or otherwise serve their needy neighbors are still often kicked to the civic curb by local public housing authorities, state judges, and other government officials. The politics behind these actions is not always pretty. Big secular nonprofits and well-positioned for-profit firms—professional service delivery organizations that for decades have "won" government contracts while avoiding independent performance audits—suddenly become interested in church-state issues when their oligopolies are threatened by competition from local faith groups. In many cases, the faith groups have been doing the work all along in return for public-funding crumbs from the "professional" groups' tables. Much the same game has too often, and for too long, been played against grassroots religious groups by large private foundations' favorite grantees.

Since leaving the White House, I have made no secret of my sense that, when it comes to public laws and policies on religion in the public square, a few too many Christian leaders let their nightmares be father to their thoughts. This is especially true, for example, with respect to overheated arguments about "Godless schools," and complaints that Charitable Choice laws, complete with their prohibitions on proselytizing and limits on hiring rights, were weak tea brewed to suit the tastes of antireligious liberal Democrats. Despite survey evidence, case studies aplenty, and personal experiences suggesting that most elite national media outlets are home to people far less religious than most Americans, I have always resisted the conclusion that their reporting is systematically biased against religiously observant people and institutions.

The *Times*, however, has very nearly converted me to that cynical view. By no objective measure is there any reality that could justify its "Religion Trumps Regulation" page-one headline.

Over the last two decades or so, the federal playing field has become less tilted against community-serving faith-based organizations, and more respectful of citizens' free exercise of religious rights. Over the same period, orthodox Christians have asserted themselves in politics in ways that challenge settled ideas about church-state relations and spark deep disagreements even with faith-friendly fellow citizens like me.

The way forward on church-state issues is with honest exchanges of views, from the secular liberal left to the Christian right, conducted in a spirit of mutual civic forbearance. Sadly, the *Times* prefers to reinforce biases against "the faithful."

Of course, the First Amendment protects not only religious freedom but also press freedom. Still, the *Times*'s claim that government at all levels has relegated secular groups to second-class citizenship status, the better to lavish special benefits on religious people and nonprofits, is not fit to print. ♦

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Party Time in Britain

Labour's civil war and the Tories' love-in.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

London

A WEEK AMONG the New Labour crowd of failed regicides, union leaders who hanker for the power wrested from them by Margaret Thatcher, and the America-loving old pro who showed them what they will be missing when he steps down, followed by a week mingling with the New Tory crowd of hoodie-hugging (young British muggers typically wear hoods), green-hued, America-haters (well not haters, just folks looking to put distance between themselves and America) is an education I commend to all serious students of the U.S.-U.K. relationship.

At these Labour and Conservative party conferences you get to see the leaders up close and personal and can talk to the delegates who turn out to cheer, drink themselves into late-night stupors, and, in their many serious moments, attend the meetings at which issues from green taxes to the allocation of health care budgets are debated.

The Labour conference, of course, featured an attempt at the reconciliation of the occupant of No. 10 Downing Street, Tony Blair, and the inhabitant of No. 11, his chancellor, Gordon Brown—an effort that failed so gloriously as to keep the sessions interesting, a feature lacking at the Tory love-in. Brown tried to persuade the crowd that Tony Blair is a bosom buddy, for whom he has nothing but the highest regard. Not a bad try by the man who just a few days before concocted—or at least failed to abort—a plot to force Blair to hit the speech circuit as a private citizen. He had almost persuaded the credulous until Mrs. Blair, Cherie Booth in her professional lawyer's life, was heard by a Bloomberg reporter to say, "That's a lie," which the Downing Street spin doctors tried to persuade the press was really, "I must get by." No sale. So Blair, taking the rostrum the next day, decided to make lemonade out of that lemon by announcing that at least he doesn't have to worry about his wife running off with the bloke next door.

The goal of the Tory leadership is to show how different the party is from the version that suffered three successive electoral defeats.

In probably the best speech of his life, Blair affirmed his intention to use the remaining months in office—he more or less voluntarily steps down in May or June—to continue his efforts to convert the educational and health care systems from producer-controlled dinosaurs into consumer-controlled service providers fit to serve a 21st-century welfare state. The unions, who continue to control the largest number of votes and provide the largest portion of the party's financing, were unimpressed, and passed a resolution to roll back the Blairite reforms. But the gent's not for turning, as the unions well knew. Their real goal is to let Gordon Brown know they expect him to ignore his previous pledges to continue these reforms and instead revert to the Scottish socialist they all believe—or are hoping—he really is.

More important to this American, Blair once again explained to a hostile audience what the war on terror is all about, and how destructive of British interests it would be to pull away from the United States. The party's fury with their leader for supporting Bush and Israel during the Lebanon war would under ordinary circumstances have resulted in a round of boos, but since Blair is on his way out, Labourites contented themselves with sullen silence.

The Tories are less eager to affirm their faith in the special relationship. Yes, Britain and America share values. But there's no need to be "slavish" followers of American foreign policy, as if Washington had ever sought such a one-sided relationship.

No matter. The goal of the new Tory leadership is to demonstrate how different the party is from the version that suffered three successive electoral defeats. So no more toadying to America, an "even-handed" policy in dealing with Palestinians and Israelis, and forget about tax cuts. Instead there are pledges to increase spending on the already overmanned National Health Service, attacks on business for selling fattening chocolate-covered oranges, approval of gay marriage and single motherhood, and green policies that might, just might, include taxes on cheap airplane flights. (A resolution calling for just such an elitist measure was barely defeated.)

Most important, the new leadership, a duo of shadow prime minister David Cameron and shadow chancellor George Osborne, presented fresh, youthful faces (Cameron turned 40 last week), designed to distinguish the New Tories from the mean old party of Margaret Thatcher. So smiles and sunshine all around, and no policies of any substance lest the party faithful

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and the electorate find something they might not like.

Both parties brought in American heavy hitters to lend some international credibility. Bill Clinton, introduced by Blair as a former president and rock star, bathed the crowd in what one delegate called "warm fudge": He loved them, they loved him back. The Tories countered with John McCain—"Labour had a past president, we have a future one"—a man made of sterner stuff than Clinton. The Arizona senator delivered a call to honesty, honor, duty, and commitment to a long war to defeat Islamic terrorism. The crowd, most of whom had never heard of McCain, loved that part of his talk, delivered after arid stretches apologizing for his age and praising Ronald Reagan in the manner of a seeker after votes in the Iowa primary.

We are entering an interesting time in British politics. Blair, who has dominated the stage for a decade, is half way out the door; the Tories, who have spent that decade warring on each other, have now left that self-defeating practice to Labour, and are on the upswing behind new, young, and emollient leaders. Cameron leads Brown by double digits in the latest poll.

Oddly, America's interests have been better served by leftish Labour: Even though the majority of its members are antiwar, its present and prospective leader understand that we are in what will be a long war with Islamic terrorists, and are more firmly wedded to the special relationship with America than are the "Cameroons." Perhaps the fact that Gordon Brown, Blair's almost certain successor, has almost 20 years on David Cameron and therefore comes closer to remembering minor skirmishes like World War II explains the difference. We do know, after all, that Brown is a serious student of history, while Cameron is a former public relations man unencumbered by the weight of that history. But should he succeed in trading opposition for office, he will be unable to avoid having history thrust upon him. ♦

Attorney General Moonbeam?

Jerry Brown keeps on running.

BY BILL WHALEN

WHILE THE REST of the nation lurches ahead to Election Day, California remains stuck in a time warp.

Take the governor's race between incumbent Arnold Schwarzenegger and State Treasurer Phil Angelides. It started out as the 1984 presidential contest redux, with Arnold reprising the role of Ronald Reagan (hopeless optimist) and Angelides that of Walter Mondale (doomed the moment he called for higher taxes). That was before Angelides set the way-back machine to the 1960s, channeling his inner Tom Hayden and vowing to sue the Bush administration to return California's National Guard troops from Iraq. Unfortunately, for Angelides, time isn't on his side; the polls suggest he's headed for a double-digit drubbing.

Then there's California's other blast from the past: Jerry Brown, who's running for state attorney general. It marks the eighth time that Brown, who succeeded Reagan as governor of California 32 years ago this January, has sought statewide or national office. That includes presidential runs in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, but doesn't begin to cover two terms as Oakland mayor (his current job), a two-year stint as chairman of the state Democratic party (he'd later drop his party affiliation before returning to the fold prior to his Oakland mayoral bid), plus some creative moonlighting as a talk-radio host, a student of Zen Buddhism in Japan, and a buddy of Mother Teresa in Calcutta.

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It's a race with dynastic overtones: Jerry Brown's father, Pat, served two terms as California's attorney general and two terms as governor during the '50s and '60s; his sister Kathleen served one term as state treasurer before getting trounced in the 1994 governor's race. Despite the lengthy résumé, no one is suggesting that Jerry Brown is geriatric—at 68, he's five years younger than California's senior senator, Dianne Feinstein. Still, it seems strange that the Brown torch hasn't already been passed to a new generation. In November 1982, while Brown was wrapping up his final year as governor, Mario Cuomo was winning a first term as governor of New York. Twenty-four years later, it's Cuomo's *son*, Andrew, who's running to be New York's next attorney general—the same job Brown covets in California.

Brown has attempted to portray his mayoral record as that of a Giuliani-type city boss who's tough on crime. But homicides in Oakland are up nearly 100 percent since Brown first took office. And that's just the tip of the iceberg, says Brown's opponent, state senator Charles Poochigian, whose campaign eagerly counts the ways in which Governor Brown was soft on crime: pardoning seven first-degree murderers; supporting a prisoners' bill of rights while opposing a crime victims' bill of rights; vetoing a bill reinstating the death penalty (a veto the state legislature overrode); and opposing lethal injection as California's method of capital punishment.

Brown has responded that the pardoned murderers were elderly, and that as attorney general, he would

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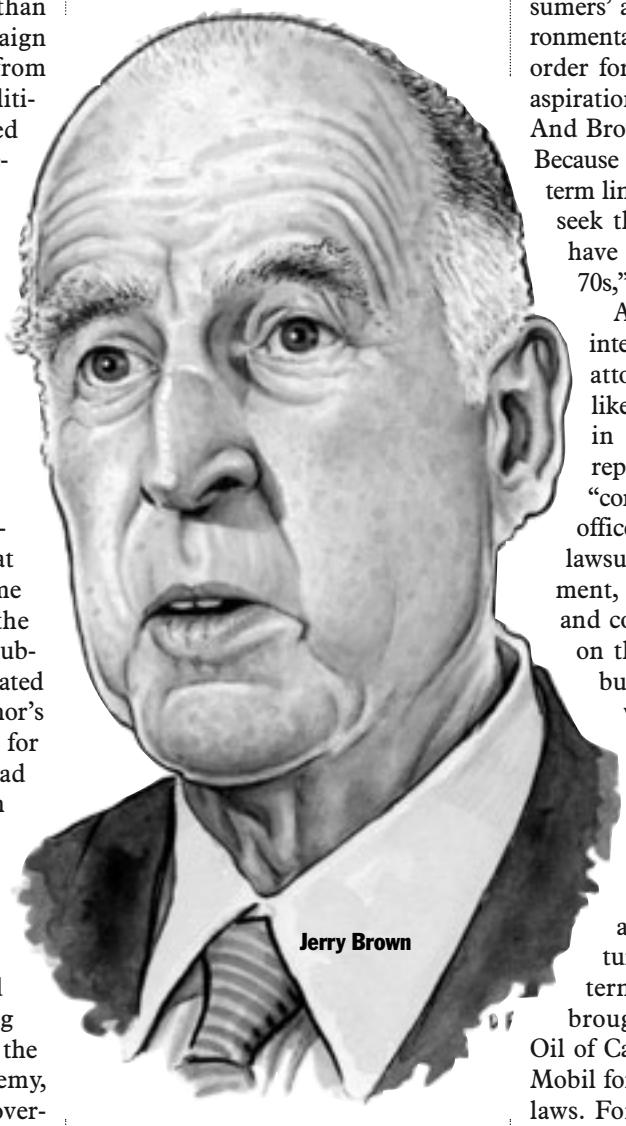
carry out laws allowing executions. If so, he might want to explain the company he keeps. Brown's radio ads are voiced over by Peter Coyote, the actor and Bay Area fixture who's a regular at San Quentin death-penalty protests.

And yet Brown will not be easily defeated. He has a 15-point lead in the polls, better name recognition than Poochigian, and a larger campaign war chest. Poochigian hails from Fresno, which isn't much of a political stronghold (his family settled there to take up farming after fleeing the Armenian genocide, and his mother still lives on their original 20-acre plot). But he does have at least two factors working for him: A Schwarzenegger landslide over Angelides could sweep fellow Republican candidates into office; and Brown's support has not grown beyond 45 percent, suggesting a skeptical electorate.

It wasn't skepticism but downright fatigue and frustration that led to Brown's defeat the last time he ran for statewide office, in the 1982 U.S. Senate race won by Republican Pete Wilson (who also defeated Brown's sister in the 1994 governor's race). Brown had been governor for the previous eight years, and had traded in the governor's mansion for a floor mattress in more Spartan digs, tooled around town in a Plymouth instead of a state limo, escorted Linda Ronstadt to Africa, elevated Rose Bird to the state's high court, and seemed powerless against infesting Medflies. After Brown proposed the creation of a state space academy, Mike Royko nicknamed him Governor Moonbeam. But will voters in this election—some of whom weren't alive in 1982, much less eligible to vote—remember those greatest hits? Are they aware of Brown's other oddball musings, such as likening capital punishment to "Hitler's Germany" and characterizing corporate America as "an out-of-control Frankenstein"?

It's that last quote that's worth remembering. In California, attorneys general hail from one of two parties, and in office they pursue one of two paths: serving blue-collar, law-and-order justice, or attacking white-collar crime. George Deukmejian, an attorney general during the '70s and early '80s and Brown's successor as governor, made a name for himself as a death-penalty champion.


Jerry Brown

By contrast, the man Brown hopes to succeed as attorney general, Democrat Bill Lockyer, seems obsessed with corporate malfeasance. Lockyer has used his office to sue Enron, whom he accused of gouging California during the state's energy crisis. More recently, he filed a lawsuit against a half-dozen automakers for allegedly contributing to global warming, and indicted Hewlett-Packard executives for corporate espionage.

Where would an Attorney General Brown take California? The post allows for tremendous political latitude. In California, the attorney general not only represents the state in civil and criminal court proceedings, but also acts as a patron saint for consumers' and victims' rights and environmental groups. The job is made-to-order for any politician with higher aspirations and a fertile imagination. And Brown seems still to have both. Because he served as governor before term limits went into effect, he could seek the top job again in 2010. "I have a bright future, into my late 70s," Brown has told reporters.

At the very least it should be interesting. "I will be an unusual attorney general. I will not be like the other ones," he said back in April. Brown also tells reporters he wants to take a "common sense" approach to the office, which means settling civil lawsuits, protecting the environment, plus addressing city crime and corporate abuses. Poochigian, on the other hand, would likely build on his legislative record, which includes tougher penalties for sexual predators, gun-toting felons, and identity thieves.

As California secretary of state in the early 1970s, Brown showed what kind of attorney general he might turn out to be. During his one term in that position, he brought suits against Standard Oil of California, ITT, Gulf Oil, and Mobil for violating campaign finance laws. For Democrats, three decades later, corporate-bashing is, if anything, more in vogue. In New York, Attorney General Eliot Spitzer is about to be elected governor after using his office's crusades against the securities, insurance, entertainment, and computer industries to raise his profile. And for Brown, too, becoming attorney general would be an opportunity to show off his timeless knack for self-aggrandizement. ♦

Illustration by Drew Friedman

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What's That Smell?

The GOP is stinking up the joint.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

LIKE OTHER DEEP-THINKING people, I'm full of principled, idealistic, high-minded indignation at the GOP. What a stampede of sleaze. Jack Abramoff is the world's best lobbyist—for the Federal Penitentiary System. Bob Ney was deep in the ethical rough at St. Andrew's. Randy "Duke" Cunningham's favorite weapons system turned out to be the political suicide bomb. Tom DeLay may or may not have broken campaign finance laws, but he did his best to look like he was breaking them. He might as well have tied quail feathers to the GOP majority in Congress and sent it hunting with Dick Cheney.

Watching Republicans in Washington is like watching lemmings, if lemmings jumped into cesspools instead of off cliffs. Splash! There goes Mark Foley! Now the news networks are broadcasting G.O.*P.U.* around the clock.

Actually, the Republicans should be grateful for their lying, thieving scum. It distracts the public from the things the Republicans have done that are honestly bad. Our postwar policy is creating Weimar Iraq. And when the Islamofascist Beer Hall Putsch comes there won't even be beer.

Social Security privatization was presented to the electorate with a public relations and marketing flair not seen since New Coke. Intelligence collection has been given an additional bureaucracy to correct the problems created by too much bureaucracy in intelligence collection. "Homeland Security" sounds like a failed 1980s savings and loan. Didn't Grandma lose $20,000 when Homeland Security went under? Then there's No Child Left Behind. What if the child *deserves* to be left behind? What if the child deserves a *smack* on the behind? We have a national testing program to test whether kids are . . . what? Stupid? You've got kids. Kids are stupid.

Immigration policy will fence the border, providing economic stimulus to the Mexican ladder industry. The National Guard is stationed on the Rio Grande—U.S. troops standing between you and yard care. President Bush said that if illegal immigrants want citizenship they'd have to do three things: pay taxes, hold meaningful jobs, and learn English. Bush doesn't meet those qualifications.

And Republican federal budgets have shown less self-restraint than Mark Foley's instant messaging. Billions are being spent so college students will have someplace below sea level to get drunk during Mardi Gras. Hundreds of billions are being spent indiscriminately dumping Medicare prescription drugs on old people. There's a new warning on the Levitra bottle: If arousal lasts more than four hours you haven't screwed the taxpayers enough.

I am so moved by principle and idealism, so indignantly high-minded, that I'm changing sides. At least the Democrats aren't hypocritical about being scum. After Gerry Studds was censured for molesting an underaged congressional page, he was reelected six times. Therefore, in the midterm elections, I'm working to get Democrats into office.

And work it is. There's the problem of putative speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, whose very name summons images of children coming home from day care madly scratching their scalps. Then, when you see Pelosi speak, it's impossible not to think of Lucy holding the football for Charlie Brown. I hope her campaign slogan isn't "A New Kick-Off for America."

There is also the problem of issues for the Democrats to run on. You're going to elect Democrats to control government spending? And you're going to marry Angelina Jolie for her brains. The privacy issue—government spying on U.S. citizens—isn't going to work. True, NSA has been collecting all our telephone information, but anyone who's answered the phone during dinner knows that every telemarketer on earth has that information already. Illegal immigration? When the Democrats were in charge, the illegal immigrants were from al Qaeda. And as for Iraq, the best the Democrats have been able to do is make the high school sex promise: "I'll pull out in time, honest."

Maybe I won't work for the Democrats. It's too much of a job. And jobs are not something the Democratic base is famous for having. Maybe I'll just *act* like a Democrat and stay away from the polls on November 7 and hang around the house drinking beer. In fact, I think I'll start practicing that now, so I'll be ready on Election Day.

Opposing Republican hegemony is not without cost. It's going to cost me my marriage if I keep hanging around the house drinking beer. But I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make sure the GOP loses. And I promise to stay involved in my children's' lives, occasionally picking them up at day care as they madly scratch their scalps. It takes a village, etc.

No price is too high to pay for principled idealism. And as soon as high-minded indignation has defeated the Republicans, there will be the impoverishment from protectionism, the horror of nuke-wielding petty dictators, and the increased killings by terrorists to prove it. Deep-thinking people will be relieved that Dennis Hastert can no longer cover up misbehavior in the congressional page program. ♦

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Disarming the Mullahs

There are things we can do that would limit their options. **BY HENRY SOKOLSKI**

NOW THAT NORTH KOREA has called America's diplomatic bluff by testing a nuclear device, and the wrangling has begun over how best to sanction Pyongyang, the question arises of what's in store for Iran. Will we bomb? Some insiders say yes, that President Bush has already decided that if Iran fails to freeze its enrichment program, he will direct our Air Force to attack Iran's nuclear plants sometime before he leaves office.

The urgency for bombing, of course, turns on the assumption that we can know precisely when Iran will acquire its first nuclear weapon—which we can't. A decision to bomb also presumes we can set Iran's nuclear weapons program back significantly with a single targeting campaign. This, at best, is unclear. Iran, for instance, might have a parallel, hidden nuclear weapons effort. Given Tehran's ability to tunnel a kilometer deep, and its stonewalling on what it has done with the advanced uranium enrichment plant designs it bought and claims it chose not to build, there's cause for concern. No bombing campaign is likely to destroy Iran's nuclear engineers. Whatever plants we destroy, they can rebuild.

A decision to bomb should turn less, then, on when we think Iran will "go nuclear" (something we are sure to get wrong) or how effective our first strike might be (also a matter of uncertainty) than on what we and Iran are likely to do with the time such a strike might conceivably buy. Although there's some confusion about what we might do—bomb indefinitely or persuade the Iranian people that we are on their side—what Iran might attempt is pretty clear.

First, since February, senior Iranian officials have repeatedly warned that Iran would retaliate against any U.S. strike by blocking the Strait of Hormuz. All oil shipped from the Persian Gulf on tankers exits through this channel. If successful, such a move would choke off international access to roughly 40 percent of the world's oil exports—an economic disaster for every oil importer worldwide.

Second, we know Tehran is willing to use terrorist proxies against Israel, Iraq, the United States, and any of its friends.

Finally, Iran has threatened to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to block further international nuclear inspections if it is sanctioned or otherwise prevented from exercising its "inalienable right" to make "peaceful" nuclear fuel. If Iran were to do this, a cascade of proliferation—starting with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey—could easily commence.

The United States and its friends could hedge against these threats, and should already be doing so. The first move is to reduce the vulnerability of energy exports from the Persian Gulf. Oil experts have determined that all but the 2 to 3 million barrels a day that Iran itself ships through the Strait of Hormuz could be piped instead to ports on the Red Sea and the Sea of Oman. Pipelines from Iraq, past Kuwait, through Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea, the UAE, and Oman are already in place; they only need to be connected.

This could be done by reopening the Iraqi pipeline across Saudi Arabia that the Saudis seized from Saddam in 2001, and by having anti-drag agents (chemical additives that increase the flow of existing oil pipelines as much as 60 percent) at the ready. It also would require building relatively short spur lines to integrate Omani and UAE pipelines with the Saudi pipeline system (something now under discussion). Most of this project could be completed in roughly 18 months for less than a billion dollars. In addition, it would be useful to build up a stock of oil on ships at sea as a floating reserve. This could provide a supply cushion for several weeks, allowing a smooth transition to moving oil by pipe rather than through the strait.

Insurance underwriters could discreetly back this project by raising premiums on oil shipments through the strait and lowering them for oil that bypasses the strait. This would make good business sense. If Iran were to block the strait, the proposed bypass system would substantially mitigate the damage to the U.S. economy.

The second step the United States and its allies should take is to make sure that if the Strait of Hormuz is blocked, the pain falls mainly on Iran. Some 80 to 90 percent of Iran's foreign export earnings and up to 75 percent of its revenues depend on Iranian oil getting through the strait. Iran is reported to have roughly $50 billion in foreign cash reserves. Some believe this is enough to keep the regime (and the 100 elite families that run it) operating for one to two years. But if the U.S. Treasury and allied financial ministries act in concert, it's unclear how much of this money Iran would have access to.

Assume the world's strategic oil reserves continue to grow (the United States alone has 687 million barrels in its government reserves and our key allies are not far behind). Allow a decline in oil demand due to higher prices. And assume the availability of

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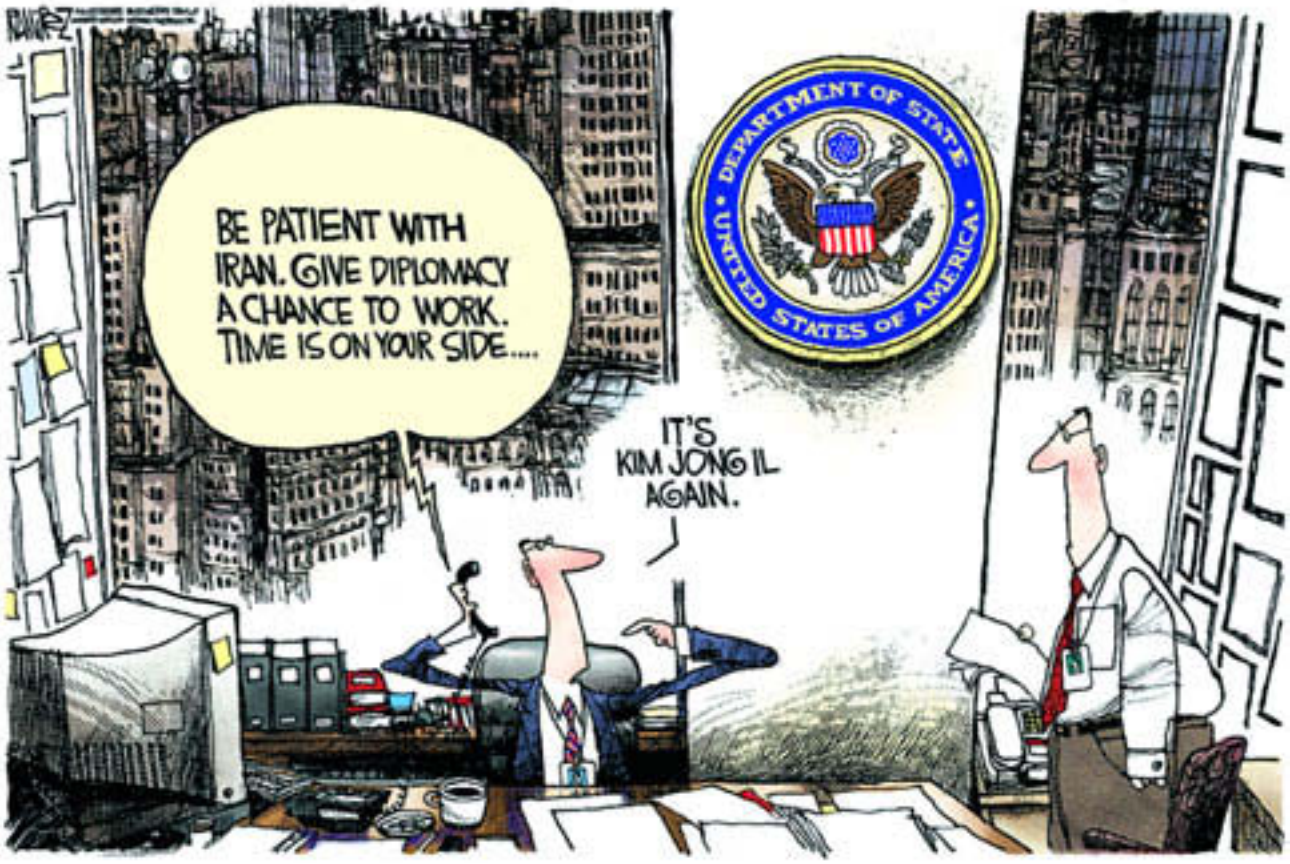
a million barrels a day of surplus pumping capacity in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Clearly, under this set of assumptions, the importance of Tehran's influence over the energy flowing through the strait begins to wane. More important, Iran would be less able to threaten commerce through the strait than would the United States and its friends, depriving the mullahs of their most important power source: Iran's oil export revenues.

To drive this prospect home, the United States and its allies should also increase their air and naval presence in the Gulf region. One nonprovocative way to do this would be incrementally to increase those substantial international forces already deployed in the region to enforce conventions against drug and slave trading, terrorist transit, and smuggling. Russia and China may disapprove, but most of NATO's navies (and those of smaller states like New Zealand) are actively supporting these operations already, as are most of the Gulf states, *including* Iran. Neither Moscow nor Beijing has a veto over enforcing these conventions and augmenting naval forces in the Gulf.

Finally, it would make sense to propose country-neutral restraints on nuclear proliferation. France has recommended that, if states violate their inspection obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and withdraw from the treaty, they ought to be held responsible for their transgressions. France has also highlighted a proposal to prohibit states that violate these obligations from making nuclear fuel for a decade, and to require that they allow intrusive wide-area surveillance inspections as provided under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) Additional Protocol, which Iran has signed. Washington should back these sensible ideas and start making the case that Iran must act to restore its good name after having been found in violation of its IAEA inspections obligations.

Washington also should join with its friends to fund and staff an IAEA wide-area surveillance unit that could be on the ready for cases like Iran (a $10-30 million a year proposition). Such inspections, if Iran were ever to agree to them, would be far from foolproof, but they would help slow down and ferret out illicit nuclear activities. Standing up such an inspection unit would also demonstrate that we were serious about demanding more nuclear transparency of Tehran, and that we had some clear equitable criteria by which we might increase or relax pressure on Iran.

Certainly, if we took these prudential steps now, we would be in far better position to demand that the mullahs either comply with their nonproliferation obligations or face tough measures, starting with a regime-threatening oil quarantine. Getting ourselves to this point, far more than any bombing campaign, is what we should be aiming for. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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California, Too!

Another judicial setback for same-sex marriage advocates. BY DAVID M. WAGNER

THE FUTURE ain't what it used to be. You can't count on the inevitable any more. When the highest court in Massachusetts announced on November 18, 2003, that a right to same-sex marriage was contained in the Bay State's 226-year-old constitution, it seemed as if that court's self-concept—boldly leading a retrograde nation into a brave new world—might pan out.

Almost three years later, precisely zero state courts of last resort have agreed. The high court of that electric-blue state New York has strongly disagreed. The latest court to weigh in (at 131 pages) is an appeals court in that other blue-state paradise, California, which on October 5 reversed a trial court in four cases combined under the name *In re: Marriage Cases*.

The California court, like the one in New York, holds that a decision to recognize same-sex marriage must rest with the legislature and/or the referendum process—in a word, with the people. In the meantime, the Golden State's referendum-passed law barring same-sex marriage—Prop. 22, which passed by a 61-39 margin in 2000—is not irrational, and so must be upheld. (Full disclosure: One of my former students represented the appellant in the California case, and another represented an amicus curiae.)

In a long and somewhat repetitive opinion for the 2-1 majority, Presiding Justice William R. McGuiness hits the major points that are familiar from the New York opinion (and the Massachusetts dissents): Classifications based on sexual orientation get "rational basis" scrutiny, not "strict scrutiny"; California's marriage law is not discriminatory because it affects both sexes equally *and* is not part of a system of either male or female superiority; the "rational basis" test is deferential to legislators (or voters in a referendum); finally, and above all, major cultural transformations (as even the Massachusetts court admitted it was carrying out) should be the work of the people, not judges.

In addition, the court notes a tension between two of the arguments from the same-sex marriage advocates: the right of privacy, and the right of expression. First, it says, the right of privacy is not an infinitely malleable vessel: It has legal contours, and those do not yet include same-sex marriage. As for the right of expression—which is inherently public, and therefore sits awkwardly beside an argument based on privacy—California's law restricting marriage to a man and a woman forbids no expressive act. It only denies state assistance in one particular act—getting married—that is less an act of personal self-expression than one of self-joining to a communal paradigm.

A pervasive presence in this opinion is the Domestic Partnership Act California first adopted in 1999—i.e., civil unions. The advocates of this measure no doubt thought themselves properly progressive, but to the respondents and the dissenting judge here, they were actually retrograde: They gave same-sex couples every legal right *except* marriage, and thereby created—wait for it—a system of *separate but equal.*

Um, no, says the majority. California is in the forefront of giving same-sex couples legal recognition. The state's Domestic Partnership Act in fact renders untenable any charge that California law as a whole is bigoted against gays.

It would be a mistake to see *In re: Marriage Cases*, even if upheld (it is being appealed to the California Supreme Court), as a ringing affirmation of society's unique interests in traditional marriage. Though it alludes to the theory that the purpose of marriage is to encourage stability in those relationships that are most likely to produce children—and that are uniquely capable of producing *unplanned* children—the court does not endorse this view, because California attorney general Bill Lockyer disavowed it in presenting his case. Other dicta in the opinion suggest that, on a full trial record with adequate expert testimony (not present here), this court might be willing to hold that homosexuals do, after all, fit the criteria of a "suspect classification"—which would mean "strict scrutiny" (and probable overturning) for any state classifications based on sexual orientation.

The dissent by Judge J. Anthony Kline is a long exercise in a familiar methodology: generality inflation. The Supreme Courts of both the United States and California have held that their respective constitutions contain a "right to privacy," haven't they? Of course they have. And privacy shouldn't be confined merely to the things the courts have previously applied them to, should it? It should be generalized, so as to include anything that contributes to individual self-fulfillment, right? Well, maybe so, in a late-night college bull-session sort of way.

Then there are the miscegenation cases. They held that "marriage" means a self-defined yet state-recognized relationship with anyone at all, right? Well, no, they didn't—but we can easily *generalize* to reach that conclusion. There are enough dicta there to create the effect, and where the dicta fall short, there are lots of law review articles to cite. (That's how we govern ourselves, right? See what the law profs say in their learned journals?)

In fairness to Judge Kline, generality inflation has not been unknown in the U.S. Supreme Court. *Griswold* did

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not make *Roe* legally necessary, just culturally predictable: *Roe* took the *Griswold* right (privacy of a married couple) and raised it to a higher level of generality ("broad enough to include . . ."). And so it has frequently gone in the Court's post-1965 "privacy" cases.

So Judge Kline has not made up a novel methodology: His dissent uses a tried-and-true tactic for putting judges at the forefront of (what they take to be) social progress. But more and more state courts, it would appear, are concluding that, in a democracy, that is not where judges normally belong. ♦

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Putin Gets Away with Murder

It's time to confront the Russian leader.

BY ANDERS ÅSLUND

IN RUSSIA, gangsters have the macabre custom of making a birthday present of a murder. On Vladimir Putin's 54th birthday, one of his fiercest domestic critics, the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, was shot to death in her apartment building in central Moscow. She worked for the weekly *Novaya Gazeta*, Russia's last independent newspaper. Its deputy editor was murdered a couple of years ago, and the killer was never found. Although Politkovskaya had been tailed by the FSB for years and her murderer was captured on film, he got away. The Kremlin has made no comment. The prosecutor general claims to have personally taken charge of the investigation, but such investigations seldom result in an arrest.

Western policy toward Russia has been an unmitigated failure since Vladimir Putin became president on New Year's Eve 1999. Every year since then, the Russian government has moved further away from both the United States and the European Union, and Western influence over Russia has waned.

In the last year, President Putin has exported ground-to-air missiles to Iran that can shoot down American F-16s. He has exported arms to Syria that were successfully used by Hezbollah against Israel. A year ago, the Kremlin cheered when Uzbekistan evicted a large U.S. air base, and now it is encouraging Kyrgyzstan to do the same.

Meanwhile, state-controlled Russian media spew out nationalist and anti-Western propaganda. Every evening after the first state channel's main newscast, one of the Kremlin's foremost propagandists, Mikhail Leontiev, delivers his daily diatribe against the West.

To consider Putin a strategic partner or even ally would be to close one's eyes to reality. If Putin persistently behaves like an enemy of both the United States and the E.U., we had better pick up the gauntlet. Only a fool or a coward would do otherwise.

The G-8 summit in St. Petersburg in July became a symbol of all that is wrong with Western policy toward Russia. For three days, the Western leaders participated in this televised celebration of Putin's new authoritarian powers, and they got nothing in return.

To flatter himself further, Putin invited the presidents of the other eleven former Soviet states for the ensuing week, but they know how to handle him. A few hours before the summit, four of them dropped out—two announcing that they were going on vacations. By contrast, in St. Petersburg it was President Bush who endured Putin's insult ("We certainly would not want to have the same kind of democracy as they have in Iraq.").

The fundamental problem of Western policy toward Russia is that it is still based on the idea that the Cold War is over. Alas, this truth has become obsolete, as Putin has gone about reviving one feature after another of a police state, including authoritarian rule and an anti-Western foreign policy.

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The West has retained the same friendly but half-hearted policy toward Russia it pursued under Boris Yeltsin. But Putin is no Yeltsin. In fact, Putin is the anti-Yeltsin. Whatever Yeltsin was, Putin is not. Whatever policy the West pursued toward Yeltsin should be replaced with its opposite—with a few exceptions: Not even Putin wants to revive Communist ideology, and Russia remains a market economy.

Although poorly understood in the West, Yeltsin was a democrat, as Leon Aron shows in his excellent biography. Yeltsin believed in free and fair elections and free media. Putin, by contrast, is a secret policeman. In his book *First Person*, made up of interviews, he marvels at his own skillful repression of dissidents.

Putin talks about democracy while systematically destroying it, as Berkeley political scientist Steven Fish has detailed in *Democracy Derailed in Russia*. Putin has mostly destroyed press freedom, deprived both parliamentary chambers of power, undermined free elections, eliminated the election of regional governors, and seized control over the courts. Where Boris Yeltsin boldly and peacefully dissolved the Soviet empire, giving its peoples freedom, his successor has publicly complained that this was the "greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century."

Yeltsin believed in private enterprise. He has been criticized for privatizing the Russian economy in the only way that was possible, rather than leaving a larger share in the hands of the state. Putin is currently undertaking the greatest re-nationalization the world has seen.

Yeltsin regarded both himself and Russia as part of the free and democratic Western world, while Putin does not. He criticizes both the United States and the E.U. in ever more paranoid and conspiratorial language, while praising China more and more. Unlike Westerners, the Chinese do not ask nosy questions about authoritarianism, corruption, and money-laundering, questions for which Putin has no good answers.

In the end, Yeltsin was one of us, although larger than life. So it was worth talking to him and exploring our common interests through quiet diplomacy. The opposite is true of Putin. He gives lip service to our values, but regularly undermines them. A liar should not be treated like a gentleman.

Anna Politkovskaya

AP / FYODOR SAVINTSEV

On a few points, the United States has got its policy toward Russia right. First, the United States and the E.U. stood up for democracy during Ukraine's Orange Revolution, and Putin accepted defeat. Second, the West protested loudly against the restrictive Russian draft legislation on nongovernmental organizations, which was softened. Third, the Western outcry over Russia's cutoff of gas supplies to Ukraine last January led to an immediate resumption of deliveries. Putin was upset, but he changed his policy. And the recent U.S. embargo against the Russian state arms export agency Rosoboronexport and the military aircraft producer Sukhoi because of their deliveries of sophisticated arms to Iran is another step in the right direction.

The lesson is that Putin only responds if protests are loud, public, and backed up by threats. Rather than talking about the Cold War being over (which is true), we should remember that the most successful policies toward the Soviet Union were those of Ronald Reagan.

It could be argued that Western policy toward Russia has not mattered much in recent years because Russia has been too weak to dare to be foolhardy. That is no longer the case. In 1999, Russia's GDP was $200 billion in current dollars. This year, it will reach $920 billion. Russia has financial surpluses to waste on foolish policies at home, and perhaps also abroad.

Right now, Russia is apparently preparing for a war against the independent former Soviet republic of Georgia. With no justification whatsoever, Putin personally has accused Georgia of state terrorism. He likened the arrest of four senior Russian military spies in Georgia to the acts of Stalin's henchman Lavrenty Beria. Russia has evacuated its diplomats and citizens from Georgia and imposed a nearly complete embargo. Major Russian military maneuvers are under way.

Most analysts draw parallels to Yeltsin and argue that Russia's actions are meant only to frighten. I doubt that. Putin is a warrior. He won his presidency on a very dubious war, the second war in Chechnya—the region whose agony Anna Politkovskaya covered at the cost of her life. Putin won his reelection and authoritarian rule with his war against the oligarchs, especially his confiscation of the Yukos oil company. It is a logical next step to illegally prolong that rule by starting a war against Georgia.

It couldn't be plainer that the United States needs a serious policy toward Russia and needs it fast. ♦

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Kinky Friedman Runs for Governor

But is it good for the Texans?

By Matt Labash

We are wayfaring, wandering gypsies alone
Looks like looking for is where we'll always be
Cursed to be born as serious souls
No one will take seriously

—Billy Joe Shaver,
country singer and spiritual adviser
to Kinky Friedman

All across Texas

When it comes to black, Kinky Friedman picks up where Johnny Cash left off. He wears a black bull-rider hat, black boots, and a black belt with a buckle the size of a Mini Cooper hubcap. Over his black pearl-button shirt, he mixes things up a bit. He'll either wear the black leather vest, given to him by Waylon Jennings, or the black "preachin' coat," cut by Manuel, the famed former head tailor of Nudie's in Nashville.

In the airy, pastel atrium of the Ambassador Hotel in Amarillo, Ma and Pa Frontporch do double takes at the breakfast buffet, pausing by the Froot Loop dispenser, saying, "Isn't that . . . " when they spy the dark rider with bandito facial hair hunched over his omelet, skimming the newspaper. Kinky looks less like a Texas gubernatorial candidate than a desperado fortifying himself to knock over a stagecoach.

As I join his table, he welcomes me warmly. I've read a stack of Kinky stories on the plane, so I know how it works: Kinky is a shtick-Tommy gun, so if you tape eight hours of interviews with him, but are looking for original material, you know you'll have to throw seven out right off the top. Most of it will already have traveled several times around the world. He's pro-recycling: He calls it "rotating the crops." And so I try to peel the onion a bit, getting right down to his raw, vital essence—not political, but musical.

Matt Labash is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

Kinky (so named for his "Jew-fro," as the ladies at Supercuts call it) is most famous these days for trying to become the first independent governor of Texas since Sam Houston in 1859. For two decades prior, he was known for his 17 well-reviewed comic-mystery novels, with himself cast as the protagonist ("I'm not afraid of anything, just that I may have to stop talking about myself for five minutes," he's said). But it was as head cheese-maker in Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys that he first entered public consciousness.

Before that, Kinky did a two-year Peace Corps stint in Borneo, where he introduced the locals to Frisbee while they introduced him to betel nut and hallucinogenic rice wine. Perhaps under the influence of it, he conceived the Jewboys. When Kinky got back to Texas in the early '70s, Austin had become a hothouse for outlaw country heroes who'd said adios to the slick sounds of Nashville in order to do some honest-to-God songwriting. Cosmic Cowboys and gypsy troubadours like Michael Martin Murphey, Jerry Jeff Walker, Billy Joe Shaver, and other guys with two first names walked the land.

Kinky and the Texas Jewboys served as the court jesters of the movement, though they were no redneck Weird Al Yankovics. There was much more going on. Kinky lampooned bigotry by assuming the role of the bigot in songs like "They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore" and "Proud to Be An Asshole From El Paso." He could also pull off grim weepers, like "Ride 'Em Jewboy," undoubtedly the most haunting country song ever written about the Holocaust, even if it's the only one. "Anything worth crying can be smiled," he sang.

Because of his place in this universe, he has played, gotten drunk, or played drunk with nearly every musical hero of mine, from Levon Helm to Kris Kristofferson to the late, great Townes Van Zandt. Lyle Lovett is on his speed-dial. He has gotten baked on the secondhand smoke of Willie Nelson. Bob Dylan ate barbecue at his late parents' ranch. ("Thanks Mrs. Friedman," said Dylan, "You must be very proud of your son.") When I ask him about

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hanging out with Tom Waits and Chuck E. Weiss on the Bukowski side of Los Angeles in the early '70s, he lights up: "You know Chuck E. and the Goddamn Liars!!? [Weiss's band] Have you ever heard his 'Bad Jews in Malibu'? It's f—ing great!"

The musical revelry hits a speed bump when we start talking about his close friend Willie Nelson, whom he calls the "hillbilly Dalai Lama," and with whom he currently has a double-or-nothing wager. Willie took him for a grand on how the Iraq war would turn out (Kinky thought Bush and Blair would be "heroes"). Kinky now stands to win two grand if Joe Lieberman beats Ned Lamont—eight thousand if you count his Lieberman side bets with other suckers. Kinky's an inveterate gambler who takes "fact-finding trips to Vegas," though "these days, I'm bettin' on Texas." Still, of Lieberman, he says, "That f—er better win."

I ask him if he's heard "Teatro," some of the most achingly beautiful music Nelson ever recorded. He hasn't. So I take the CD out of my bag and try to give it to him. "It won't get listened to," he says. "I don't listen to music anymore. I think it stems from having been in so many dance halls and bars—I'm just pretty averse to it. Personally, I'd rather watch Fox News," he says. "Though I keep it muted most of the time."

Just then, a voter approaches, and takes a seat at our table as if she were an old friend. Her name is Kelly Wages, and she's voted for Republican incumbent Rick Perry in the past, but now she's undecided, like much of Texas. Perry leads the pack of four candidates, but with an anemic 35 percent, meaning that he's hemorrhaging even Republican support. "Why should I vote for you?" she asks Kinky.

Most politicians would take this as a cue to begin sucking up. But Kinky shoots me a get-a-load-of-her look and goes the reverse-psychology route. "Because I have no political experience whatsoever." (This is only partly true. In 1986, he ran for justice of the peace in his Hill Country district, promising to lower the speed limit to 54.95. He lost.)

Wages says that's precisely what she's worried about. Kinky says she shouldn't be too worried. The other candidates have 89 years of political experience between them, and Texas is fiftieth in education, health care coverage, and care for the elderly, while being first in executions, toll roads, property taxes, and dropouts, thus illustrating one of his campaign slogans: "Kinky Friedman: Why The Hell Not?" When I bring up a recent *Dallas Morning News* story taking issue with many of Kinky's figures, he says, "Oh f— that lady! We're forty-third, not fiftieth—yaaayyyyy!" Wages starts laughing.

I ask Wages if he has her; I can feel her teetering. "Well," she says, "he talks some sense." She says Perry is too bullish on executions, and too negligent on health care. A little less indulgent of Wages since I'm not running for office and she's interrupted my interview, I point out that the two positions are complementary, that the more people are executed, the fewer will need health care. "That's a good point," Kinky allows.

He continues in the hard-to-get vein. If Wages doesn't want him, he doesn't want her. As a reformer, he wants to "get the money changers out of the temple," one of his frequent Jesus references. ("I'm washed in the same blood you are, brother," he tells me. "I'm a Judeo-Christian. Jesus and Moses are in my heart, two good Jewish boys who got in a little trouble with the government.") If Wages can't tell the difference between him and the other candidates, if she "thinks my style's too rough, and you prefer a dignified, self-important, pompous-ass politician," then maybe she should vote for someone else. Wages looks hurt, but intrigued. Kinky says the other candidates will try to sink him, like they do everybody, because that's what these cockroaches do. That's why someone like her, who's generally a good person, won't run for office. "They know what you've done," I assist. "It's a walk-in closet, isn't it?" asks Kinky.

After ten more minutes of this, Wages nearly has her pants charmed off. Kinky finally asks for her vote. "I'm an unemployed youth," he begs, "I need the job." (He's 61, though "I read at a 63-year-old level.") She says he's got it, and bids adieu with a lingering hug. After she leaves, he turns to me, mouthing his unlit and ever-present Monte Cristo No. 2 cigar. "She ain't votin' for us. C'mon, let's go find some place I can smoke. There could be a guy running around here in a Hitler suit, and all they'd care about is the guy who's smoking."

Smoking is one of many ways Kinky proves himself politically incorrect, a trait he takes great pride in since the obverse has contributed to the "wussification" of Texas. I ask him what other behaviors are "wussified."

"Doing interviews with THE WEEKLY STANDARD," he replies.

One of the reasons it's great fun campaigning with Kinky is that he's in on the joke. Which joke, you might ask? All of them, pretty much. He fundamentally understands how absurd it is to spend two years of your life begging people to love you, to secure a job in which half the population at any given time will hate you. I get the sense it's made him an action junkie, though he insists if he loses, he'll "retire in a petulant snit" to a life of quiet contemplation.

I ask why he does it. Because he loves Texas and hates what's happened to her, he says. And because, "I'm a

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dealer in hope. That's a great thing to be, the next best thing to being a mender of destinies, which is harder." Watching his rapport with people, who mob him everywhere we go, I offer that he gives people "happiness injections." He mulls it over. "Happiness injections—that's a good line," he says. "Take it," I offer. "Ehh," he says, having second thoughts, "It's kind of gay."

After two years of banging away, he's finally convinced the press that his candidacy is serious, though he sometimes confuses them, such as when he says, "F—'em if they can't take a joke." Or such as when he suggests Willie Nelson will helm his new Commission on Energy, which will champion biodiesel farmers' co-ops. (When critics raise Nelson's frequent pot-related brushes with the law, Kinky protests, "He's not heading the DEA.") Or such as when he lays out his Five Mexican Generals border plan (paying Mexican generals to keep illegals on their side, withdrawing money from their accounts when illegals make it through). "It's a joke," he says, "but a joke that's a good idea."

AP Photo / Jack Plunkett

Supporters deliver petitions that qualified Friedman for the ballot, Austin, May 11.

If the line is blurred, it always has been for Kinky. As he once wrote, "There is a fine line between fiction and nonfiction, and I believe Jimmy Buffett and I snorted it in 1976." (He's been off the "Peruvian marching powder" since 1985, he says, when he left New York and came back to the Texas Hill Country, which he calls "my hospital.") It might be a measure of the artifice of politics that many Texans regard Kinky, an ersatz cowboy who prefers to ride "two-legged animals" over horses, as the most authentic candidate in the race. "Rick Perry's a comedian too," says the only candidate who's been nominated this year for the Thurber Prize for American Humor, "he just doesn't know it."

As we traverse Texas, it becomes clear how uninterested Kinky Friedman is in appealing to delicate sensibilities. For instance, our driver, who is also his former keyboard player and current Bundini to his Ali, is named Little Jewford. "He's Jewish, and he drives a Ford," Kinky explains to audiences. The two, who have known each other since they were children at summer camp, are by now like an old married couple. Kinky has never married. He lives with his five dogs, "the Friedmans," and 60 or so others at his nearby Utopia Animal Rescue—he is always taking in strays, of both the canine and human variety (his current Kato is a Katrina evacuee, a street preacher and musician named Rev. Goat Carson). But he is emphatically heterosexual, saying, "I don't kiss babies, I kiss their mothers."

On their endless road trips, Kinky and Jewford feel no pressure to fill long silences. At campaign stops, Jewford keeps up an arch patter in a booming FM-DJ voice, saying things to confuse voters such as, "I'm not laughing at you, I'm laughing through you," all while wearing a shimmery test-pattern sportsjacket that Kinky says is made of "Elvis's shower curtain." When challenged on his name, Jewford, a classically trained pianist, is not averse to showing doubters his Little Jewford Visa card as proof, a card he regularly whips out to pick up checks. Says Laura Stromberg, Kinky's press secretary who is also Jewish, of Jewford's lack of tightness, "He's a big disappointment to the Jewish community."

The campaign also proves unconventional in the journalists it attracts. Kinky and company are often followed by a documentary crew, Jeremy Cohen and Gopal Bidari, two talented young auteurs who work for hotshot producers out of Hollywood. They are so ever-present that Kinky took to calling them Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He then grew bored with that, deciding Cohen, who is Jewish, should be named "Jihad," while Bidari, who is Indian, should be "Macaca," in solidarity with the Sen. George Allen scandal. He's even taken to introducing them at campaign speeches as such, saying they're making a documentary on him for Al Jazeera. Jihad and Macaca have

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ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Pelosinomics

Political Economy: Now that it's all scandal, all the time in Washington, the Democrats are letting their guard down a bit to tell us what they'll do with the economy after they win in November. Maybe we should listen.

Six editorials a day, 30 a week, 132 a month on the most important topics of our time... more than twice what you'll find elsewhere.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has been all over the place talking about what Democrats will do after Nov. 7. But it's hard to take her seriously when she promises to "jump-start our economy and reform our economic policy...to address the needs of working families."

Huh?

"Jump-start the economy"? That's what President Bush did in 2003, when he pushed through bold, broad tax cuts to end a slump that began in 2000 under a Democratic administration.

Since the cuts took effect, the economy has added $1.26 trillion in real output, $14.4 trillion in net wealth and 5.8 million new jobs, while productivity has grown 10% and business investment 24%. Since 2000, total consumer spending has risen $1 trillion – nearly $8,000 per household – after adjusting for inflation. The Dow Jones industrial average is hitting new highs.

Then there's the budget deficit, which the Congressional Budget Office reckons will come in around $250 billion. By our calculations, that's about 1.9% of total output. In early 2004, when Bush vowed to halve the shortfall, it stood at 3.6% of GDP.

The fact is – and we're dealing with facts here, not fantasies – this economy has done better than anyone expected, especially given the mammoth hits it took in the months just before and after Bush took over in January 2001. Democrats know this full well, despite their rhetoric.

They know that nearly $7 trillion in wealth was washed away by the stock market's collapse in 2000 and 2001. They also know that business investment essentially collapsed for three years as a result of that market meltdown and 9/11.

And yet, as noted in a new report from Congress' Joint Economic Committee, ours has outperformed every other major industrial economy since 2001. Reason: tax cuts and low interest rates.

What do the Democrats promise to do about all this prosperity? They'll let the tax cuts lapse, socking millions with billions of dollars in higher levies. They'll raise the minimum wage, hurting the working poor and those with the fewest skills and the least education. And they'll extend jobless benefits, a move that in the past has kept unemployment high (but which today, at 4.6%, is below the average of the last 40 years).

One, and often two, cartoons a day from Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Ramirez, IBD's Editorial Cartoonist and a Senior Editor.

They'll also try to impose new regulations across the economy on everything from energy to broadband, punishing industries they don't like and subsidizing those they do.

Worst of all, they'll do nothing – absolutely nothing – to stop the growth in entitlement spending that will start to engulf the treasury beginning in 2009. Their solution as always: more taxes.

And this is just what they'll admit to. Who knows what else is in store.

How sad the Foley scandal has sucked all the air out of the debate over the nation's future. How tragic that many will now sit this election out for all the wrong reasons. When they wake up to find their taxes raised, the economy stumbling and their incomes falling behind, they'll regret their lassitude. But then it will be too late.

Reykjavik Forever

Security: This week marks the 20th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's bold stand against trading missile defense for an arms treaty. Recalling the lessons of the Reykjavik is key to winning the global war on terror.

At least one house of Congress may be taken over by a Democratic leadership committed to cutting and running from Iraq. And in Iran, a terror regime is trying to pull the wool over the world's eyes about its nuclear program. What better time to recall the late, great president's nerve?

In October 1986, at what was supposed to be a pro-forma meeting between Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Iceland, the Soviet premier unexpectedly offered an unprecedented reduction in nuclear weapons. His price was that the U.S. abandon all but the most rudimentary research on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which Reagan had called "a new hope for our children in the 21st century."

Contemporary accounts say that after the two sides argued in circles for two hours, Reagan gathered his papers, stood and told Gorbachev: "No way."

A few days after the summit, Reagan pointed out that "the Soviets are hard bargainers. America must be even more patient and determined and united. America must speak with
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cause of peace, the epitome of military schemes, of the unwillingness to remove the nuclear menace looming over mankind. There can be no other interpretation."

The Americans, he added, "lacked the breadth of approach, understanding of the unique character of the moment and, ultimately, courage, responsibility and political determination that are so necessary for

Reagan and Gorbachev bid grim-faced farewells in Reykjavik, Iceland, 20 years ago after the U.S. president refused to budge on missile defense. AP

resolving vital and complicated world problems."

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, just elected second term, compared SDI to France's disastrous Maginot Line in World War II. Missile defense "would increase the nuclear arms race," he said, because the other side "will have to develop their technology to create weapons which

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er Think This Way?

97 Reasons Democrats Are Weak On Defense And Can't Be Trusted To Govern In Wartime

Today's Democrats are nothing like Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Kennedy, who with courage and decisive action kept on top of their jobs and aggressively confronted one national defense crisis after another.

- Jimmy Carter, elected during the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and ① believing Americans had an inordinate fear of communism, ② lifted U.S. citizens' travel bans to Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia and ③ pardoned draft evaders.
- President Carter ④ also stopped B-1 bomber production, ⑤ gave away our strategically located Panama Canal and ⑥ made human rights the central focus of his foreign policy.
- That led Carter, a Democrat, ⑦ to make a monumental miscalculation and withdraw U.S. support for our long-standing Mideast military ally, the Shah of Iran. ⑧ Carter simply didn't like the Shah's alleged mistreatment of imprisoned Soviet spies.
- The Soviets, ⑨ with close military ties to Iraq, a 1,500-mile border with Iran and eyes on Afghanistan, aggressively tried to encircle, infiltrate, subvert and overthrow Iran's government for its oil deposits and warm-water ports several times after Russian troops attempted to stay there at the end of WWII. These were all communist threats to Iran that Carter never understood.
- Carter ⑩ thought Ayatollah Khomeini, a Muslim exile in Paris, would make a fairer Iranian leader than the Shah because he was a religious man. ⑪ With U.S. support withdrawn, the Shah was overthrown, and ⑫ the ayatollah returned and promptly proclaimed Iran an Islamic nation. ⑬ Executions followed. Palestinian hit men were hired to secretly eliminate the opposition so the religious mullahs couldn't be blamed.
- Iran's ayatollah ⑭ then introduced the idea of suicide bombers to the Palestine Liberation Organization and paid $35,000 to PLO families whose young people were brainwashed to attack and kill as many Israeli citizens as possible by blowing themselves up. This inhumane menace has grown unchallenged.

  The ayatollah ⑮ next created and financed with Iran's oil wealth Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that later bombed our barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and sailors. With Iran's encouragement this summer, ⑯ Hezbollah into not running, ⑲ stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 U.S. personnel hostage for 444 days.
- Carter, after nearly six months, ⑳ belatedly attempted a poorly executed rescue with only six Navy helicopters (three were lost or disabled in sandstorms) and Air Force planes with Delta Force commandos. The mission was aborted, but foul-ups on the ground resulted in a loss of eight aircraft, five airman and three Marines. The bungled plan was never put down on paper for the Joint Chiefs to evaluate. There were practice sessions, but no full dress rehearsal, and pilots weren't allowed to meet with their weather forecasters because someone in authority worried about security.
- America ㉑ can thank the well-meaning but naive and inexperienced Democrat, Jimmy Carter, for a foreign policy that lost a strong military ally, Iran, and ㉒ put the U.S. at odds with a gangster regime that was determined to build nuclear bombs to wipe Israel off the map and threaten the U.S. and other nations. Iran also has a working relationship with al-Qaida, which also wants nukes. Care to connect the dots?
- Shortly after a meeting at which Carter kissed Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on each cheek, ㉓ the USSR invaded Afghanistan. Carter the appeaser was shocked. "I can't believe the Russians lied to me," he said.

  During the Carter Democrat period, ㉔ communism was on a rampage worldwide. In an unrestrained country-capturing spree, communists took over ㉕ Ethiopia, ㉖ South Yemen (㉗ located at the mouth of the Red Sea where they could block Mideast oil shipments and access to the Suez Canal ㉘ Afghanistan, ㉙ Angola, ㉚ Cambodia, ㉛ Mozambique, ㉜ Grenada and ㉝ Nicaragua.
- Compared to the pre-Vietnam War defense budget in 1964, Carter requested in fiscal 1982's defense budget ㉞ a 45% reduction in fighter aircraft, ㉟ a 75% reduction in ships, ㊱ an 83% reduction in attack submarines and ㊲ a 90% reduction in helicopters.
- The Soviets for years ㊳ consistently spent 15% of their GDP on defense; ㊴ in 1980 we spent under 5%. As a percentage of our government's spending, defense was lower than before Pearl Harbor. No wonder a Republican, Ronald Reagan, had to vastly increase defense spending to help us win the 45-year old Cold War and relegate the USSR to the ash

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  unist enemy rapidly
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- For eight years ㊹ congressional Democrats ridiculed and fought with Reagan and were on the wrong side of nearly all his defense and economic policies. They said he wasn't bright – an "amiable dunce," as party elder Clark Clifford ㊺ put it. They maintained his tax cuts wouldn't work, ㊻ that he insulted the Soviets by labeling them the "Evil Empire" ㊼ and that he was going to start World War III by putting missiles in West Germany to counter new Soviet SS-20 nuclear missiles installed in East Germany. ㊽ John Kerry wanted a nuclear freeze that would guarantee the Soviets overwhelming tactical nuclear superiority in Europe. ㊾ Kerry seemed to constantly advise retreating, giving up and handing our enemies what they wanted – a recipe for us to lose every war.
- Democrats waffled ㊿ on Reagan's request for support of Contras who were fighting to stay alive and take Nicaragua back from Daniel Ortega's communist Sandinistas. Each month, the Soviets poured $50 million worth of Russian tanks, antiaircraft weapons, Hind attack helicopters and munitions into that central American country.
- Democratic leaders (51) all dismissed as a ridiculous pipe dream Reagan's plan for the U.S. to develop a missile that could shoot down incoming enemy missiles. (52) Showing no vision, Democrats mockingly called it Star Wars.
- Democratic politicians (53) were proved wrong on virtually every vital Reagan policy. (54) His tax cuts set off a huge seven-year economic boom that created 20 million new jobs. (55) Interest rates tumbled from 21% to 7 1/2%. (56) Inflation nose-dived from 12% to 3%. And (57) oil prices collapsed when – contrary to warnings from Democrats – he removed price controls on natural gas.
- Reagan's motto was "Peace through Strength," (58) not peace through weakness and accommodation. With his steadfast determination and perseverance, the communists were kicked out of Grenada and defeated in Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. And for the first time in history Soviet expansion ended.
- Reagan (59) never quit exerting pressure on the Soviets. In Berlin, he demanded that Gorbachev "tear down this wall," and in time the Berlin Wall fell. In the end the communist Soviet Union dissolved. The Reagan-Bush administration had won the Cold War.
- Years later, (60) a group of Russian generals were asked about the one key that led to the collapse of the USSR. They were unanimous in their response: "Star Wars." Gorbachev feared it would render the Soviets' nuclear missiles obsolete for an overwhelming first strike, and they could not afford to build the hundreds more that would be needed or hope to match America's great technical ability. (61)

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taken to their parts. They now wear nametags at Kinky's fundraisers.

In Texas, the smart money holds that Kinky has the Jewish cowboy vote sewn up. After those three voters, nobody's positive where he stands. Kinky's currently clustered about 15 points behind Perry, along with the deadly dull Democrat, Chris Bell, who has said he "could be a corpse" and still get the straight Democratic vote, a theory he seems to be putting to the test. With them is fellow independent Carole "Grandma" Strayhorn, whose two big claims to fame are being former Bush spokesman Scott McClellan's mom and being a grandma. As most people who've ever suffered through a McClellan press conference would, she emphasizes the latter.

AP Photo/ Jack Plunkett

Kinky Friedman with former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura and Willie Nelson

Such polling, however, only registers likely voters. And with two independent insurgencies, a big turnout could mean lots of unlikely voters making an appearance at the voting booth. "They ain't gonna come out to help Perry," says Kinky. Dean Barkley, Kinky's campaign manager, who masterminded Jesse Ventura's victory in 1998, says Ventura was languishing at precisely the same place Kinky is at the same point in the election (around 20 percent), and that the pollsters were caught napping because of their likely-voter fetish. For contradictory evidence, the campaign will hand you a sheaf of statewide call-in and Internet polls, contests Kinky walks away with most of the time. As even *Texas Monthly* has stated, if every eligible voter in Texas were required to cast a ballot, "Rick Perry would be out of a job and Kinky Friedman would be governor of Texas."

With such undercurrents swirling about, it's small wonder that Bell, "a serious man with a serious plan," in his words, privately called Kinky to ask him to step aside so that the anti-Perry vote wouldn't be fractured. Kinky publicly rebuked him, saying, "We will not negotiate with terrorists."

To sop up some of these unlikely voters, we go from Amarillo to Lubbock to Austin, hitting many universities along the way. At his college gigs, Kinky comes off like your favorite crusty uncle—the one who pretends to have a heart of stone, but who'll slide you candy or a dollar or a sip of beer when no one's looking.

On the way to the stage, he keeps loose with a steady patter of Kinksterisms. He'll ask the local student body representative, "How long will this ordeal last?" or, "Has there ever been a candidate suicide?" As reporters leave him to take their seats, he'll say with utter solemnity, "Good luck out there," and he periodically revs himself up with reverse fist pumps, as though he is starting a weed-eater.

Politically, he says he's like Frank Sinatra: "I started left, and moved right." Consequently, Kinky is still fairly liberal on social issues—he's reluctantly pro-choice, and he's for gay marriage ("they have every right to be just as miserable as the rest of us"). Otherwise, he does a fairly convincing impression of a Republican from ten years ago, back when they still had principles: tough on illegal immigration and crime, anti-tax and pro-fiscal responsibility.

But his performances are less stump-speech, more period-piece/one-man show. Just as Hal Holbrook plays Mark Twain, Kinky Friedman plays Kinky Friedman—offering a fruit platter of Twain and Will Rogers and Uncle Earl Long, all sliced and diced and stuck in a Cuisinart. He stalks the stage, punctuating the air with his cigar, spraying the glossolalial audience with a hail of one-liners: *I'm 61 years old, too old for Medicare and too old for women to care. . . . Once enough people can get biodiesel, I will trade in my own Yom Kippur Clipper. That's a Jewish Cadillac—it stops on a dime and picks it up, basically. . . . Musicians can better run this state than politicians. We won't get a lot done*

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in the morning, but we'll work late. . . . Trust me, I'll hire good people.

After the show, as you come to think of it, the kids often stand a few hundred deep, wanting everything signed, from their shirts to their chemistry lab books—even though most of them don't know his writing or his music. He signs every last autograph at every stop—fan etiquette he learned from Willie Nelson. "I've seen him do it in the rain," Kinky says.

The university circuit, like the rest of the campaign trail, is a grind. But Kinky says the young people charge him and give him spark—they are the "wind beneath his knees," as Jewford says. He feeds on them like a hillbilly Nosferatu, giving them his phone number, telling them he needs their energy in his administration, promising them patronage jobs, as he does to Southwest Airlines ticket agents and hotel bellhops: "You'll be on Easy Street!" he says. "It's a big street," Jewford dryly confides.

As we hurtle over the flat plains of North Texas—"wandering through the raw poetry of time," as Kinky calls it—he expounds on why his outsider ethos isn't just some silly gimmick. "Common sense, common honesty—that's all it takes. That's all I've got. And sometimes I'm not sure about common sense." He mentions the Buddy Holly sound, which came right out of Lubbock. "He didn't read blogs, or see all these TV channels, or hear much different kinds of music other than R&B out of Shreveport. As a result, he came up with a really original sound. And that's because of the aching emptiness. Just the fact that he was surrounded by so much emptiness. Sometimes an original thought comes out of great expanses. Not just geographical, but spiritual as well." It's the "Cowboy way," what Texas used to be about, says Kinky, "spiritual elbow room."

After our Lubbock stand, he starts thinking about the kids again. They always promise they'll vote, but tend not to make it to the polls if, say, their favorite *South Park* rerun is on. He turns to me in the backseat, his black hat slung over his knee as he exhales cigar smoke. "You know, I think the young people will probably f— us. They f—everybody else, right?" I'm astounded and impressed by his candor. Later, I find out he gave the same line in the same place to the London *Spectator* two months ago.

It's two days before the only gubernatorial debate, and Kinky is highly agitated. Not because Perry has agreed to only one of six proposed debates. Or because his campaign had to fight the other campaigns in a Texas death match for Kinky to be able to wear his cowboy hat during the broadcast. "He was born with that hat," protested Barkley, who won.

Kinky is fuming because the blogosphere and his opponents are tarring him as a racist. It's a bad rap for a guy who was a member of Students for a Democratic Society, who picketed segregation, who spent his entire irreverent music career making sport of the kind of yahoos they're suggesting he is. At issue is Kinky's calling bowling balls "nigger eggs" in a club performance 26 years ago and, more recently, his blaming Katrina evacuees for a spike in the murder rate in Houston, calling them "thugs and crackheads."

He has refused to apologize for any of it, saying the first charge is preposterous on its face, since he was playing a racist in his performance, and the second charge is true, but it has nothing to do with race, and this is precisely the kind of scared-of-your-own-shadow political correctness that keeps Texans from addressing real problems, like the border crisis. "If you ain't offending somebody," he says, "you ain't getting anything done."

In a debate prep session at his Austin headquarters, Kinky's staff throw all manner of questions at him, trying to trip him with the names of obscure Texas agencies, making him explain how a bill becomes a law. It's something he says he doesn't need to concern himself with since the institutionally weak Texas governor's gig means he'd basically be less of a legislative animal, more the "most powerful judge at the chili cook-off."

And anyway, all Kinky really wants to talk about is race. As his staff drills him on issues like health care and college tuition, Kinky finally explodes, "Ask me the nuclear question about the nigger eggs!" He has the single-minded obsessiveness of the man who has been unjustly accused.

He is so bothered that he is still chewing this cud when we move on to Dallas. At the Hotel Adolphus bar, drinks flow freely enough that I, who usually lead the charge in such matters, am given the nickname "Mr. Sip-Sip" when Dean Barkley decides I'm not drinking fast enough. Kinky ratifies it, and employs it liberally ("Sip-Sip, what do you think?"). But he is still stewing, swearing blood oaths that Perry better not tangle with him on this issue. "Fact is, you're going to call the only guy with a social conscience a racist—I'm going to nail your f—ing ass."

He announces a new line he'll employ in the debate when given the chance: "There you go again, Governor, playing the race card against me. And I never played the gay card against you." Perry who is married, has suffered unsubstantiated rumors that he is gay, enough so that he's seen fit to swat the rumors down in interviews with mainstream news reporters.

The next day, at a stop at the University of Texas, Dallas, Kinky is still discussing the idea with me and a

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few others. Taking off my journalist's hat, I tell him that while I'm always pro-entertainment, it's a bad political play. At the very least, he has to soften "gay card" with a jokier term like "the Liberace card." He likes it. But he's not sure if "Liberace" is the right word. He calls for a strategy session. He wants suggestions, which come fast and furious: Butt Pirate, Pillow Biter, Twinkie, Teapot. Mr. Sip-Sip (that hurts). He abandons the idea—it wouldn't be the Cowboy Way. "There's no mud on the high road," he says.

The debate is at a Dallas television station later that night. Nobody wins, and nobody loses. It is uneventful and safe. The other three candidates come off as competently blow-dried, freeze-dried, and mummified, respectively. Kinky suffers a few perfunctory scoldings on the race issue, without resorting to calling anyone a Sip-Sip. He hangs in there and doesn't embarrass himself, but he is tentative and nervous, without fire. His best line comes in the press room afterward, when he says, "I stood toe to toe . . . and I feel good. Right now, I'm still voting for myself."

Later that night, we adjourn to the hotel bar with staffers, Kinky's girlfriend just in from England, and Jihad and Macaca, who are grateful for the free drinks. Kinky admits to me that he couldn't find his rhythm. "I did all right, but it was my C game." It's too bad the voters of Texas couldn't see his A game, as I had several hours before.

We make a stop at the Reading and Radio Resource Center, an audio reading service for the blind. Kinky takes his place in a studio, while Jihad, Macaca, and I watch him through the glass of the control room. He is a guest on the *Eyes of North Texas* show, hosted by an 83-year-old volunteer named Adele Campbell. She is spunky and spry and gives him a workout. She mentions that he likes to refer to himself as "the Good Shepherd," and wants to know if he's equating the voters of Texas to sheep. He smiles appreciatively with cigar clenched in teeth, recognizing a kindred spirit. "Well if this is a flock of sheep," he says, "we certainly hope they turn out November 7th."

Adele asks him to read something he's written, and he picks an essay he wrote for *Texas Monthly*, now collected in his book, *Texas Hold 'Em: How I was Born in a Manger, Died in the Saddle, And Came Back as a Horny Toad*. In print, Kinky shticks it up as much as he does on the stage, but he is a fine writer nonetheless. When he does a real piece of work, as opposed to, say, a chapter on Texas prison slang, he turns a beautiful phrase, gets in and gets out, and doesn't stop for smoke breaks.

The essay is entitled "The Hummingbird Man." It's about his father, who taught him most of what he knows, from how to belch, to how always to "treat children like adults, and adults like children." His dad, who Kinky calls "Tom," ran a summer camp for kids on the ranch called Echo Hill where Kinky still lives. He died a few years ago.

The piece starts off with advice from one of their dishwashers, a guy named Slim who "wore a Rainbow bread cap" and "drank warm Jax beer in infinite quantities." He told Kinky, "You're born alone and you die alone, so you might as well get used to it."

He didn't think much of it when he was a kid, but he's come to reconsider:

> I live alone now in the lodge where my late parents once lived, and I'm getting used to it. . . . Sooner or later, fate will pluck us all up by our pretty little necks. If you have a family of your own, maybe you won't feel it quite as much. Or maybe you will. I'm married to the wind, and my children are my animals and the books I've written, and I love them all. I don't play favorites, but I miss my mom and dad.

After a reminiscence about how he and his father used to tend the hummingbird feeder, watching as the population of birds exploded, he drops the hammer:

> Now, on bright cold mornings, I stand in front of the old lodge, squinting into the brittle Hill Country sunlight, hoping, I suppose, for an impossible glimpse of a hummingbird or of my mother or my father. . . . And I still see my dad sitting under the dead juniper tree, only the tree doesn't seem dead, and neither does he. It takes a big man to sit there with a little hummingbird book, taking the time to talk to a group of small boys. He is telling them that there are more than three hundred species of hummingbird. They are the smallest of all birds, he says, and also the fastest. They're also, he tells the kids, the only birds who can fly backward. The little boys seem very excited about the notion of flying backward. They'd like to try that themselves, they say. So would I.

Adele chokes up, and ends her show early. "You put me in tears, Kinky," she says. He waves her off with a line he used to dispatch hecklers when they threatened to lynch him and worse: "If we can just reach one person . . . " I'm not far behind Adele, spared only by the ridiculousness of witnessing this scene in a room with two guys nicknamed Jihad and Macaca.

After a week on the road with Kinky Friedman, I'm starting to think that the rodeo clown of the gubernatorial election has some intangibles that won't show up in likely-voter polls. He has a heart like a lion, "one eye laughin', one eye cryin'," as he says. Maybe the voters of Texas still have time to see that, and respond accordingly.

Or maybe they'll respond for other reasons, I think as I watch Kinky and Adele in the hallway afterward, him flirting with her, promising she can be the hostess of the governor's mansion, and then she'll be on Easy Street. Maybe they, like him, just need a job. ♦

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Running from Iraq

Don't imagine it will reduce the jihadist threat

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Is jihadism growing exponentially because of Iraq? The liberal parts of the press, Democratic politicians, and numerous counterterrorist experts say as much. They cite the classified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) "Trends in Global Terrorism," completed in April 2006 but recently leaked in snippets, which they claim concluded that we are losing the fight against Islamic extremism because the war in Iraq is producing ever-expanding waves of holy warriors.

While it is surely true that jihadism is alive and well, and that the Iraq war has a role in its continued vibrancy, the insistence on a causal connection obscures a host of lasting factors that would powerfully fuel America-hatred whether or not the United States had gone back to Iraq. It also invites the fantasy that our exiting Iraq would leave us better off, when in all likelihood it would fan the flames of jihadism.

Nevertheless, a consensus is growing in Washington. There isn't *really* much difference between left and right: While Democrats Howard Dean, John Kerry, and John Murtha all wish for a rapid departure, former Republican Secretary of State James Baker will soon release his centrist "alternative," reportedly announcing that victory is impossible and our best bet amounts to "cut, pause, talk to the neighbors, and run." Conservative writers like George Will and William F. Buckley long ago gave up on the idea that the United States could help build a democratic government in Iraq. Fewer and fewer among the nation's political and intellectual elites believe that "staying the course" in Iraq advances the war against terrorism and our national interests in the Middle East.

The NIE, or at least the "Key Judgments" summary that the president declassified and released, didn't in fact say that the war in Iraq had made us less safe, or that Iraq was necessarily the primary ingredient fueling the "global jihadist movement." But the summary certainly implied that things aren't good and that Iraq has become a rallying cry among Sunni holy warriors. It raises legitimate questions. If abandoning Iraq would reduce the terrorist threat to the United States and leave the Middle East in better shape, then that course would be compelling.

Before March 2003, much of the counterterrorist community had already decided that an American-led war in Iraq would harm the West's counterterrorist efforts. Were they right? Is Iraq jet fuel for the anti-American hatred of jihadists? And if so, does that mean the United States should refrain from pushing policies that infuriate extremists across the Islamic world? What would be the likely strategic ramifications in the Middle East of a "redeployment" of U.S. forces out of Iraq?

Let us be absolutely clear: The war and its most tangible result—the empowerment of the Iraqi Shia and Kurds—have galvanized a Sunni jihadist cause in Mesopotamia. The Sunni will to power is a ferocious thing. Neither this magazine nor CIA and State Department analysts foresaw either the amplitude of this sentiment or the spread of fundamentalism among the Sunni community, widely deemed the bedrock of secularism inside Iraq. And the war has certainly provided riveting imagery and stories for Sunni holy warriors globally. It's reasonable to assume that the conflict has helped anti-American Sunni jihadists multiply their numbers.

Iraq, moreover, like Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War, has provided a place where jihadists from different lands can meet, become blood brothers, and acquire deadly skills. Holy warriors in Iraq might learn something from Baathists turned Sunni supremacists. Saddam Hussein's Iraq trained many men to kill efficiently and savagely. When Saddam's Baathist totalitarianism spiritually ceased to exist, in its place, religious identities gained ground. Foreign holy warriors who hook up with ex-

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Baathists in Iraq will probably go home more dangerous than when they arrived—especially, as the NIE warned, if they go home victorious.

Al Qaeda spokesmen regularly declare that Iraq is at the center of their global effort to humble the United States, the great violator of Islamic lands and virtue. We should believe them—although their preferred battleground would still be America if they could figure out a way to put jihadist cells onto our soil. The Bush administration and Muslim Americans, who have shown themselves highly resistant to the holy-warrior call, have so far kept al Qaeda from again fulfilling its dearest dream.

That's about all one can say for sure about the effects of Iraq on the global jihadist movement. Yet that's not where the administration's critics like to stop. In their eyes, the Iraq war has somehow ruptured the radical Muslim psyche in ways that earlier events and preexisting factors did not.

In these critics' distorted perspective, the singular provocation of the Iraq war trumps all the other well-known spurs to jihadist fury: the American flight from Beirut after the bombings in 1983, the American flight from Somalia after "Black Hawk down," the attack on the U.S. embassies in Africa, the USS *Cole*, 9/11, the continual bombing of Iraq under the Clinton administration, the economic sanctions against Saddam's regime that Muslims saw as choking the Iraqi people. The Iraq war, as the critics see it, overwhelms the American attack on the Taliban and bin Laden, the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, bin Laden's survivor charisma, the Pakistani madrassa machine, General Pervez Musharraf's retreat from Waziristan, the Saudi Wahhabi multitentacled missionary-money machine—still the most influential conveyer of anti-American, anti-Western, anti-Semitic, and anti-Christian hatred in the world—the existence of Israel, the Israeli retreat from Lebanon in 2000, Palestinian suicide bombings, the resurgence of Hezbollah, the triumph of American pop culture in Muslim lands, the *Satanic Verses*, Danish cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad, the Western assault on traditional sexual ethics and the God-ordained male domination of the Muslim home, the constant, positivist legal assault on the Holy Law, American and European support for Muslim dictatorships, the Western-centered, Western-aping, increasingly brutal Muslim regimes that have transgressed against God ever since Napoleon routed the mameluks outside Alexandria in 1798, and the unbearable Western military supremacy that reversed a millennium of nearly uninterrupted Muslim triumphs. To these critics, the Iraq war somehow is uglier than the whole cosmological affront of the modern world: Western Christians, Jews, and atheists on top; Asian Buddhists, Confucians, and Shintoists gaining power; the Hindu pantheists rising; and the Muslims, Allah's chosen people, descending.

All of this is downgraded before Iraq. It is particularly astonishing to see Iraq-centered critics discount the role of Pakistan and "post-Taliban" Afghanistan in fueling jihadism. It is arguable that Pakistan—not mentioned in the NIE's "Key Judgments"—has now replaced Saudi Arabia and Egypt as *the* intellectual breeding ground of jihadism. And what has been going on in Pakistan for decades has almost nothing to do with Iraq. European and Pakistani holy warriors no doubt cite Iraq as one of America's sins, but beneath these declarations lie volcanoes rumbling from pressures much closer to home.

In the hands of the Iraq-centered critics, too, a century-long history of ideas drops by the way. Sayyid Qutb—probably the most influential intellectual force behind modern Sunni holy war, who demanded of his followers that they look inward to fight the internal rot brought on by the meretricious appeal of Western ways—is pushed into the background. Qutb knew that Israel's victories over the Arabs were just a symptom of a deeper Muslim weakness. His followers, like many less violent members of the Muslim Brotherhood, did not rise in indignation when the Israelis annihilated Gamal Abdel Nasser's armies in 1967. That was condign punishment for an Egyptian leader who'd fallen from the faith. Like the great medieval, hard-line jurist Ibn Taymiyya, who rose in anger at Muslims' aping and tolerating Mongol ways, Qutb declared war not against "Western imperialism" but against the Muslim infatuation with the West. He helped devise the ethics that in just two generations would allow young Muslim men to slaughter women in Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Madrid, London, and New York.

The Iraq-centered critics turn the wisdom of Qutb on its head, by looking for the sources of Muslim anger in American actions, principally in Iraq. Many of Bush's harshest critics now begin every counterterrorist discussion with polls of the Muslim world. For them, a successful counterterrorist foreign policy ought to improve our image among Muslims.

Under Bush, these critics say, American foreign policy has become harsh and insensitive to Muslim feelings. Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, secret CIA prisons, and other nefarious acts have supposedly given the United States a bad name among Muslims—as if we hadn't already squandered our credibility by failing to be a "fair and honest broker" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These events have supposedly tarnished democracy and strengthened dictatorship in the region. Yet the most powerful force in Egypt trying to force democratic practices upon the dictatorship

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of Hosni Mubarak is the Muslim Brotherhood, and there is no evidence the Brotherhood wants democracy less because of American action in Iraq. Iraq may be going to hell in a hand basket, but it is an enormously dubious proposition that the powerless of the Middle East think better of their dictators because of the turmoil there.

Point: Islamic militants loathe Israel, which they view as a Jewish-Western colonial state occupying land vouchsafed to Muslims by God. There are very few mundane things that anger militant Muslims more than the "peace process," the attempt by the Americans and the Europeans to once again seduce Muslim rulers into actions betraying God, his Holy Law, and his people. But would administration critics want to walk away from the peace process because such negotiations infuriate radical Muslims, making their transformation into lethal anti-American holy warriors more likely?

Ditto for advocating women's rights among Muslims. The historian Bernard Lewis is right: The West's gradual liberation of women in their domestic and social roles is one of the principal factors behind the West's modern preeminence. And it has made the Islamic world's entry into modernity emotionally agonizing. The Franco-Iranian scholar Farhad Khosrokhavar (who recently published a fascinating study of members of al Qaeda in French prisons) summed it up nicely when he wrote:

> In removing the veil from Muslim women and in extolling a legal equality [between the sexes], which contravenes the laws of God and destroys the integrity of the family and its equitable sharing of duties between men and women, the West attempts to pervert the female race. According to the Holy Law, which [Muslim militants] interpret literally, refusing any evolution as a degradation of the faith's sovereignty, women ought to dedicate themselves to the family and the home while men remain masters of all that transpires in the public realm. The West smashes this fundamental relationship, sanctioned by God, through inseminating the virus of egalitarianism, hedonism, and sexual perversion. The liberation of women is thus in the same domain [for Islamic militants] as homosexuality and HIV.

Yet should we back down from advocating equality between men and women in Islamic countries because such advocacy makes some Muslims more inclined to convert civilian jetliners into fuel bombs? Was Madeleine Albright wrong to talk about such things incessantly? How about Karen Hughes today? Should we chastise our artists and writers—and Muslim artists and writers who've come to the West for its freedom—if they transgress the proprieties of faithful Muslims, especially radical Muslims who require only a little more psychological TNT to send them over the edge into anti-American holy war?

Bill Clinton came very close to embracing artistic self-censorship, as did Jacques Chirac, over the Danish cartoon incident. Many jihad-rising critics and former counterterrorist officials in the Clinton administration argue that we need to avoid behavior that inflames anti-American Muslim passions. By this reasoning, we will always be playing defense to their offense and possibly violent umbrage.

Do the jihad-rising critics want to rewrite history, and stop President Clinton's WMD bombings and sanctions against Saddam Hussein's regime, knowing now how bin Laden exploited Muslim solidarity by underscoring this Western aggression? Should we just have let Saddam go free (he was almost there in 2000)? The vast majority of Muslims in the Middle East certainly would have applauded. By this reasoning, who knows how many Muslim militants would have refrained from the leap into the all-consuming hatred of jihad? Maybe one of the 9/11 bombers wouldn't have flipped if we'd stopped bombing and sanctioning Iraq, and the Twin Towers would still be standing. Then again, perhaps such a cessation would have whetted the appetite of the same militants. To bin Laden and those who've embraced his cause, American defeats have been much more inspiring than American victories.

The truth is that much of what the United States needs to do to win the war on Islamic extremism will naturally infuriate those who view the United States and American culture as threatening to Islam, all the more because they also find it appealing. Your average Muslim fundamentalist, who has no intention of becoming a holy warrior, fears and hates, and admires and envies, America. Such men and women are probably near a majority of all Muslims in every Arab land. Almost everything the United States does in this world ought to annoy these people. Much of what the United States needs to do will outrage them.

For example, the United Sates will continue to work with the security and intelligence services of many Middle Eastern autocracies. Unfortunately, the CIA is incapable of truly judging the value of such dealings since its bureaucratic interests are best served by inflating these "secret" relationships. But even if Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Pakistan contribute little to our well-being, in an age of mass-casualty terrorism, a bit of information at the right moment could matter enormously. We will deal with these distasteful regimes, and their subjects will understandably despise us for it.

Even if we ramp up our criticism of these regimes—and we should—and start to distance ourselves from them and condition our aid, we will still be condemned by many in the region for advocating democracy but supporting dictatorship. Nor are we going to stop supporting Israel or opposing terrorist organizations that are also popular social movements (Hamas and Hezbollah), or speaking in favor of women's equality and artistic freedom, or supporting our European allies who may (unwisely) decide to ban

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headscarves and other traditional Muslim practices within their countries. For these reasons and more, anti-Americanism is going to remain high.

What's more, if the Middle East evolves democratically—and the democratic conversation, amplified by the deposing of Saddam Hussein, remains vibrant—anti-Americanism will shoot through the roof. Fundamentalists will enter the public conversation even more loudly than they have already. Unless one believes that the regimes in place can kill off Islamic militancy and squash Islamic organizations that have terrorist movements within them, then the only solution to bin Ladenism is for Sunni fundamentalism itself to kill it off. Throughout much of the Islamic world, fundamentalism is now mainstream thought. But holding power will deprive militants of the luxury of mere opposition. In power and out, fundamentalists and more moderate Muslims will focus more seriously on Islamic political thought and practice. Under representative government, Muslims will have a harder time avoiding the rot—the ethics that allow young men to kill so easily.

Muslims' questioning of their own world has gained steam since 9/11. Perverse as it is, the carnage in Mesopotamia, like the slaughter in Algeria and Egypt in the 1990s, has forced some reflection among Muslims about their faith and the hideous abuse it has suffered at the hands of some believers. It would be wrong to call this widespread, but it is a start. If the United States gets driven from Iraq, the soul-searching necessary to combat Islamic extremism will also suffer a rout. When Hezbollah appeared victorious over the Israelis this summer, even moderate and liberal Arab Muslims began to rethink their accommodationist stance toward the Jewish state. The very liberal Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies, who has welcomed Israelis to Amman, jumped for joy when the Israelis bogged down in Lebanon. He referred to the Israelis as Nazis. Can one ever compromise with Nazis? Intellectually honest, and unquestionably voicing publicly what many moderates were thinking privately, Hamarneh wondered why Arabs should seek peace with Israel if in fact the Zionists were beatable on the battlefield. If we withdraw from Iraq, expect Muslim liberals and moderates to once again nose-dive throughout the Middle East.

When Islamic activists become more responsible for governance, the fundamentalist civil wars will begin. (This process is starting in the Palestinian lands.) The introspection, debates, and fall from grace will be painful and quite possibly violent, as devout Muslims who incorporate the community's popular will into God's law fight it out with fundamentalists who view man-made legislation as an insult to Allah.

This contest is not what the Bush administration foresaw when it espoused democracy in the Middle East as part of the solution to the evil that struck us on 9/11. But the president's democratic reflex was correct. And as faithful Muslims decide how much of Western political thought to incorporate into their own, anti-Americanism will skyrocket. Indeed, rising anti-Americanism will be a pretty good barometer of how serious the democratic-religious debates are in the Muslim Middle East. The more serious the debates, the more furious the flailing out against America by the hard-core militant Muslims will be.

The complexity of this picture suggests, among other things, how shallow the discussion has been among those who see our mistakes in Iraq as the epicenter of our terrorist problem. Discussion of what will happen if the United States pulls out of Iraq has been similarly thin.

Osama bin Laden has always claimed that he and his followers are the "strong horse" and that the United States is a "weak horse," unable to sustain a long war against the faithful. A major American humiliation in Iraq would probably produce what the jihad-rising crowd think Iraq is already: an extraordinary stimulus to holy-warrior passion—Beirut, Mogadishu, the embassy bombings, the *Cole*, and 9/11 all rolled into one. The critics should at least try to make the argument that the hell we have now is worse than the whirlwind we will reap after we run.

Of course, we might be lucky. The Iraqi Shiites could conceivably save us from seeing the jihadists triumph in Iraq. The Iraqi Sunnis won't. Their traditional social structure was mortally wounded by Saddam. The Sunni elite of Samarra, for example—probably the most bourgeois town in Sunni Iraq—tried but failed to hold out against the radical Sunni supremacists, fundamentalists, and jihadists. The Sunni elders of Samarra actually cherished the Shiite Golden Shrine. They were its historic custodians, and often met within its confines, to talk politics and drink tea, before the men of violence blew it up. The odds are very poor that traditional Sunni hierarchies and the nonradicalized tribes outside of the major urban areas can withstand the Sunni radicals.

The Iraqi Sunni community has no grand ayatollahs and clerical structure of the Shiite kind to moderate and block its violent young men. Assuming the Shiites don't conquer the Sunni triangle, the Sunni community by itself will not spare us the sight of triumphant jihadists taking over American bases and planting their flags for all to see, courtesy of Al Jazeera's satellite coverage. Try to recall an image of the mujahedeen winning in Afghanistan in 1989. You can't—there were few photographs of that distant war. But every man, woman, and child in the Muslim world

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will be flooded with vivid, lasting images of America's flight from Iraq.

Yet if the Shiites save us from the last-GI-out-of-Baghdad jihad recruitment videos by subduing the Sunni insurgency while we're still in Iraq, it will doubtless be by slaughtering all the bomb-happy Sunnis they can get their hands on. And that Shiite-Sunni collision could powerfully stoke the anti-American flames. The Salafis and Wahhabi fundamentalists loathe the Shiites, whom they view as *mushrikun*, those who ascribe partners to God. The Shiite charismatic view of history, where the Caliph Ali and his descendants, the imams, are indispensable intermediaries between God and man, is anathema to most Sunnis. In the eyes of many Sunnis in Iraq and elsewhere, the Iraqi Shia already carry the burden of being liberated by the Americans. If the Shiites are forced to conquer the Sunni triangle, which they probably will be, Sunni Arabs will blame the United States, perhaps with a new level of ferocity.

And neighbors will not stand idly by. The Saudi fundamentalists, apparently the largest contingent of foreign holy warriors in Iraq, would add one more item to their list of satanic things the United States has done. An overt and proud Shiite conquest of Iraq—which is probably inevitable if the Americans leave—would spook the Saudis, who would probably aggressively back their Wahhabi establishment's holy war against the Shia, supplying money and weapons to Iraq's Sunni Arabs.

The Jordanian and Egyptian Sunni establishments might do this, too, given their fear of a "pro-Iranian" Shiite bloc developing. In addition, the Jordanians would fear a tsunami of Sunni refugees from Iraq, threatening to change the politics and culture of Hashemite Jordan (think radicalization beyond the wildest hopes of Yasser Arafat). Foreign aid would prolong the conflagration in Iraq. It is worth recalling the explosion of Islamic radicalism that followed the Iranian revolution in 1979: The Saudis and Iranians went head to head in supporting their preferred Muslim radicals, a competition the Saudis decisively won, with Osama bin Laden a major beneficiary. A new battle between Sunnis and Shiites would spur missionary activity, perhaps on a scale not seen since the 1980s.

On the other hand, some helpful countervailing forces to the Sunni-Shiite explosion might come into play after an American retreat. What is striking about the conflict in Iraq is actually how few foreign fundamentalists have joined the fight. Iraq ought to be flooded with tens of thousands of die-hard militants, wreaking vastly greater havoc over much larger regions. Yet Arab and Pentagon reports from Iraq suggest that only a few thousand foreign jihadists have entered. Islamic fundamentalism is much stronger today than when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Yet the jihadist commitment to Afghanistan was greater than that seen today in Mesopotamia, the second most sacred land for historically sensitive Muslims.

Figures for the Soviet-Afghan war are unreliable—they all come from Pakistani military intelligence. But the rough estimates were that 25,000 to 75,000 holy warriors came to Pakistan from 1980 to 1989. As crude as these numbers are, they still tell us something about the magnetism of Iraq and today's fundamentalist commitment to holy war. Also, we do not find the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, progenitor of modern Sunni fundamentalism, and its offshoots throwing their weight into this war. Why?

As the Israeli scholar Reuven Paz has noted, Egypt's dictator, Hosni Mubarak, may not want militants going to Iraq, as he once allowed them to go to Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya. And Egypt's Islamic activists themselves perhaps have looked into the moral abyss of holy war more acutely than most others because they witnessed the barbarism of some of their own militants in the past. They know Ayman al-Zawahiri firsthand. Egypt's Brotherhood, like its offshoots, has been a bit reluctant to embrace the global jihad of the truly hard-core. More deeply embedded nationalist sentiments may be the cause. In any case, something is going on here, something perhaps about the Sunni-versus-Shiite and Sunni-versus-Sunni strife, that makes one suspect al Qaeda's hopes for a triumphant Iraq campaign may not be requited—not if holy war brings as much discomfort as it brings glory. This could change if the Americans left and a vicious Shiite conquest of Iraq began.

And a side note: Once a radicalized Shiite community conquered central and western Iraq, it very well might turn on the Kurds. The nationalist aspirations of the Shiite Iraqis are real and raw (and a war with the Sunnis would make them worse). If the Kurds decided that the Arabs had again run amok, they might risk declaring independence. Who knows what that would do to Iraq's neighbors. But it could well make the Shia, no longer restrained by the moderate clerics of Najaf, go on the warpath. It doesn't help that the Kurdish Sunnis have oppressed the small Kurdish Shiite community. Will Washington defend the Kurds again? Will we do so forever?

One thing is highly probable: If the Americans flee, and the Shiites begin a vengeful conquest of the country, Tehran, which is already making a play to lead the radical Muslim world, will reach out globally to Sunni holy warriors to divert attention from the Iraqi Shiite counterattack against Iraqi Sunnis. The Iranian appeal will be to target America. All the expert discussion about Islamic terrorism now being the domain of "nonstate" actors will die a quick death at our expense. And the heretical Shiite Alawite regime in Damascus would likely echo this call, especially since the Syrian Sunni majority is becoming more devout. This would be an unintended, unpleasant

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consequence of the war in Iraq—of our mishandled counterinsurgency against the Sunnis and inadequate defense of the vanishing moderate Shiite center against ever-more powerful Shiite radicals. Neither the authors of the NIE on jihad nor the Democratic critics of the war apparently foresee this menace.

The president's Republican base is cracking on Iraq. Virginia's Republican senator John Warner, a faithful "stay-the-course" kind of guy, is showing signs of battle fatigue. It's a good guess that a majority of Republicans in Congress would dearly love to escape from Iraq if they could figure out how to do so without sounding like "cut-and-run" Democrats.

In Vietnam, the South Vietnamese government deployed a tolerably competent military force that held for a "decent interval" after our departure. This is unlikely in Iraq. When we start withdrawing, the entire Iraqi governing structure, along with the Iraqi army, will probably fracture along ethnic and religious lines. Stay or go, America's fate, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his General John Abizaid have arranged it, depends on the integrity of the Iraqi military. That's not a good bet, especially if we start pulling out.

Once upon a time, the Iraqi army had a strong identity, which it often forced upon the rest of the nation, but that identity was inextricably connected to the Sunni governing class. Although there are many Sunnis serving in the new Iraqi army, their service to the country probably won't withstand the tough counterinsurgency that will be required to calm the Sunni triangle. Sunni participation in the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, a Shiite, also will probably end with a serious counterinsurgency effort. Just remember how the Sunni elite acted when American forces reduced Falluja: Many went into open rebellion. Imagine how they would act if somebody tried to take down the city of Ramadi, the heart of Sunni rejectionism and power.

And it is equally unlikely that a Shiite-dominated army will be able to restrain its own kith and kin in the Shiite militias, at least while the Sunni insurgency thrives. They certainly won't be able to do so if they know the Americans are leaving. An American departure, be it rapid or gradual, anytime in the next few years would further stampede Iraqis to retreat to the security of their ethnic and religious communities. And U.S. threats to withdraw unless the Iraqis do a better job of forming a national-unity government and constraining their violent passions solicits from the Iraqis just the opposite of what is intended.

There are other reasons the American plans for a "political solution" to the insurgency and sectarian strife have been unsuccessful, but the Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish divisions alone are sufficient to render null the "Iraqification" dreams of Republicans, Democrats, and General Abizaid. A forceful U.S. presence in Iraq was always the key to ensuring that Iraq's national identity had a chance to congeal peacefully—that the Sunni will to power was contained, that Shiite fear and loathing of the Baathists and Sunni fundamentalists didn't ignite into all-consuming revenge, destroying the Shiite center led by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, and that Kurdish separatism didn't flare. We're beyond that now. But we're not beyond checking the worst tendencies within Iraqi society.

We are certainly not beyond the chance that the Iraqis can govern themselves more humanely than they were governed under Saddam Hussein. Whoever thinks Iraq is hell on earth now is suffering from a failure of imagination. If we leave, it will, in all probability, get vastly worse.

And for those who are concerned about the geostrategic stability of the Middle East or the growth of Sunni jihadism and terrorism against the United States, staying in Iraq ought to be a compelling choice. We don't need to "stay the course" that Rumsfeld and Abizaid have designed. Instead, we should follow the road map offered in these pages by the military historian Frederick W. Kagan. It's the best plan out there for winning. We—not the Iraqis—need to lead a major effort to break the Sunni insurgency. We—not the Iraqis—must police the Shiite-dominated security services to ensure they don't slaughter the Sunnis, especially as we and a Shiite-dominated army with an important Kurdish contingent make a more serious effort to control Baghdad, Ramadi, and the centers of Sunni resistance. We need to keep building up a Shiite-dominated Iraqi army and slowly deploying it in ways that it can handle—with integral American involvement, as at Tal Afar. We should expect a few Iraqi governments to collapse before we start seeing real progress. Yet our presence in Iraq is the key to ensuring that Shiite-led governments don't collapse into a radical hard core.

This may be too much for the United States now. It certainly appears to be too much for the Democrats. We would have all been better off if President Bush and his team had done what Senator John McCain advised back in 2004, when the insurgency started to rip: Tell everyone that the war would be long and hard, and pour in more troops. If we no longer have the stomach for this fight—and it's going to be ugly, with few sterling VIP Iraqis who will make us proud—then we should at least be honest with ourselves. Leaving Iraq will not make our world better. We will be a defeated nation. Our holy-warrior and our more mundane enemies will know it. And we can rest assured that they will make us pay. Over and over and over again. ♦

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Harry Truman, George C. Marshall, 1950

Truman Defeats Kennan

The lines are drawn for the postwar world BY ALONZO L. HAMBY

In June 1941, just after Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, Senator Harry S. Truman commented: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances. Neither of them think anything of their pledged word."

The sentiment was common at the time. Nonetheless, it would haunt Truman after he unexpectedly became president on April 12, 1945, and found himself forced to deal with a Soviet nation that had become an important and oft-sentimentalized wartime ally. In later years, a generation of New Left historians would cite Truman's off-the-cuff remark as evidence of a reactionary and mean-spirited attitude that led to a long, needless Cold War. Elizabeth Edwards Spalding sees Truman's words as evidence of his insight: Her assertion that he was "the first Cold Warrior" is meant as a tribute. He was, she believes, the authentic author of containment.

The First Cold Warrior
Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism
by Elizabeth Edwards Spalding
Kentucky, 336 pp., $40

Most of us probably think containment was developed by George F. Kennan a year or so after the end of World War II—first in a "long telegram" from the American embassy in Moscow, then in the anonymous "X" article ("The Sources of Soviet Conduct") for *Foreign Affairs* about a year later. Spalding reminds us that the containment Kennan, a classical "realist," advocated would have been weak and ineffectual. The containment that Harry Truman implemented—based on ideological politics and a "universalist" doctrine—was robust, got the job done, and stemmed directly from Truman's innermost convictions.

Foreign policy realism, once a doctrine of arch-conservatives such as Metternich and Bismarck, has been in bad odor among American conservatives for a generation now. Spalding is one of many intellectuals on the right who have found forceful advocacy of democracy at once exhilarating and effective. They contrast what they believe to be the defeatist compromising of realists Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to Ronald Reagan's blunt ideological Cold War-ending rhetoric. In this book, Kennan is a proxy for Nixon and Kissinger, Truman a proxy for Reagan.

The author, a political scientist trained in foreign policy, international relations theory, and political thought, concentrates on the intellectual basis of the Cold War. Her central concern is

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an implied contest of ideas between Truman and Kennan. Truman prevails as surely and as surprisingly as he prevailed over Thomas E. Dewey in 1948.

George F. Kennan, who died last year at the age of 101, was for a half-century a hallowed name among scholars of American foreign relations. Cousin of an important late 19th-century writer on Russia, educated at Princeton, trained to be a Russian specialist in the Foreign Service of the 1920s, he was minister-counselor at the American embassy in Moscow by the end of World War II. A "long telegram" he sent from there to Washington in February 1946 provided a new and much-needed paradigm to an American foreign policy establishment befuddled by manifestations of discord and hostility from the Soviets.

The Soviet Union, motivated by a combination of ideology and historic Russian expansionism, Kennan asserted, was implacably expansionist and irredeemably hostile to the Western world. Unlike Nazi Germany, however, it had no timetable. "Impervious to logic of reason . . . it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw—and usually does—when strong resistance is countered at any point."

Read by administration officials from the president on down, the telegram was the catalyst for a policy of containing Soviet ambitions, primarily in Europe and the Middle East. A little over a year later, President Truman asked Congress for a package of aid to Greece and Turkey, both threatened by Soviet designs. He also proclaimed the Truman Doctrine: "[I]t must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Kennan, by then back in Washington and head of the State Department's Policy Planning staff, approved of the aid program. His concern, which remained private until he left the Foreign Service, centered on Truman's doctrine. He later wrote that it "placed our aid to Greece in the framework of a universal policy" and established an open-ended commitment. What Truman saw as a ringing endorsement of democratic self-determination, Kennan envisioned as a millennial declaration that severed necessary and inevitable relationships between ends and means.

In the beginning, these were qualms. Aid to Greece and Turkey was a rousing success. Moreover, the Truman Doctrine was overshadowed by the Marshall Plan, which greatly facilitated the economic recovery of war-ravaged Western Europe and effectively stalled Communist drives for power in France and Italy. As Kennan noted at the time, the Marshall Plan did not represent a universal model. Europe's needs were "clear in outline, readily susceptible of short-term solution, and of urgent importance to the interests of this country."

A broader public thought Kennan was the author of the Truman Doctrine and an anti-Communist paladin. In fact, he was a professional diplomat of the highest caliber trained in a traditional school of foreign policy "realism," a deceptively simple term that deserves more exploration than it gets in this study. Realism can vary considerably with the temperament of a particular realist, but it has certain general characteristics.

Realists reject moralistic approaches to the conduct of diplomacy, which they believe should be about the advancement of national interests—limited and sharply defined. The means by which interests are pursued must be feasible. Realism, as Kennan understood it, took national power—military and otherwise—into account, but it was primarily about compromise and finding a tolerable balance of power among adversaries. Cognizant of Communist millennialism, Kennan worried about a dangerous and costly American counterpart. By and large, he thought the United States could and should deal with the Soviet Union as if it were a traditional nation state. No pacifist, he favored a limited military response to the invasion of South Korea in 1950; but like most Western liberal diplomats, he thought the task of diplomacy was the avoidance of war.

He also preferred a diplomacy unsullied by politicians. Writing of the obsequious State Department deference to Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the Republican leader who made Truman's foreign policy possible, Kennan commented: "I could not accept the assumption that Senators were all such idiots that they deserved admiring applause every time they could be persuaded by the State Department to do something sensible." Here was an unabashed elitist, downright disapproving of democratic politics.

By 1949, George Kennan was perhaps the most visible Foreign Service officer in American history. He also was probably the most misunderstood, and increasingly at odds with his superiors. He had seen the Berlin blockade of 1948-49 as an opportunity for a diplomatic initiative to establish a reunified, demilitarized Germany. Instead, the United States and its allies resorted to a dramatic and successful airlift. The establishment of West and East German states followed. When the Western European allies sought American defense guarantees, Kennan quietly opposed the resulting North Atlantic Treaty and the establishment of NATO. Spalding's treatment of Kennan is a bit one-dimensional, but she is unequivocally correct in declaring that his response to Soviet imperialism was far too tepid.

The new secretary of state, Dean Acheson, thought Kennan impossibly soft-minded, eased him out as Policy Planning director, and replaced him with Paul Nitze. Nitze was soon at work on NSC-68, a policy statement that embraced ideological struggle and called for a vigorous rearmament program to counter a worldwide Communist threat. Spalding is on firm ground when she argues that the document is best read as a statement of values and a long-term strategy of waiting-out the Soviet Union rather than as preparation for an inevitable global war. But let it be noted also that Acheson and Nitze had no particular quarrel with Kennan about realism. They clearly considered themselves realists, more so than Kennan because they felt that effective containment required hard military power.

Spalding places Truman at the end of a continuum of the three major Demo-

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cratic presidents of the 20th century, all of whom presented themselves as defenders of liberal democracy: Woodrow Wilson, who put all his faith in a universal international assembly; Franklin D. Roosevelt, who conceived of the neo-Wilsonian United Nations as an idealistic cover for the practice of power politics; and Truman, for whom "free peoples and free governments were always more essential . . . than any specific international organization."

An ideologically driven maker of American foreign policy at a time when one was badly needed, Truman was willing to spend military and economic resources to fulfill his sense of America's mission in the world. His version of containment—deployment of the Navy to the eastern Mediterranean, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, NATO, and a limited military intervention in Korea—was much more ambitious than Kennan's. Yet Truman considered himself a Wilsonian and had admired Wilson for more than 30 years when he became president. He likewise considered himself a Rooseveltian and never missed a chance to tell people he was pursuing what he believed to be FDR's policies.

Truman's ideas on foreign relations were never as fully developed as Kennan's, but they had a long history, dating from his service in World War I. As a senator (1935-45), he had been increasingly apprehensive about the menace of totalitarianism, strongly supportive of large increases in the military budget, and anti-isolationist. There was no doubt in his mind about the efficacy and the righteousness of American power.

Always skeptical of the Soviet Union, Truman was nonetheless committed to the alliance when he became president and especially anxious to secure Soviet participation in the final stage of the war against Japan. His divided impulses took him back and forth. At first bluntly protesting Soviet failure to adhere to the letter of the Yalta agreements on Poland, he backed off in order to secure Soviet cooperation on the establishment of the United Nations. A graduate of the notorious Pendergast machine in Kansas City, he knew that the term "free elections" was a relative one. An honest man who had come up the political ladder surrounded by crooks and grafters, he had long, firsthand experience in dealing with moral ambiguity. Meeting Stalin at Potsdam, he saw, as did many other Americans, a Russian version of a tough American political boss who might give his word reluctantly but would keep his pledges.

Mounting tensions over Soviet behavior in Iran, Turkey, and Greece, continued consolidations of Soviet power in Eastern Europe, and squabbling over the sharing of atomic energy led Truman to believe, by early 1946, that Moscow was more foe than friend. Kennan's long telegram doubtless helped crystallize these sentiments for him. Aside from retaining areas already under its military occupation, the Soviet Union tended to back off when confronted with American firmness, thereby vindicating both Kennan's analysis and Truman's instincts.

Truman's foreign policy, despite Kennan's fears, was selective about the fights it picked, defending only the defensible: Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East. It wrote off China as less essential to American interests and beyond American resources. Far from defining the Cold War as a military confrontation, Truman slashed military expenditures with reckless abandon until the Korean war forced a reversal. Even then, the administration kept the Korean fighting localized. The president did not sign off on NSC-68 until the Korean war was three months old.

Truman's farewell speech as president, in 1953, reflected his considered sentiments. The use of nuclear weapons and the consequences of a nuclear war were unthinkable, he declared. The Communist world operated under a set of fatally flawed assumptions. To block Soviet expansion was to guarantee eventual change in the Soviet Union. "In the long run," he declared, "the strength of our free society, and our ideals, will prevail over a system that has respect for neither God nor man." Operationally, the sentiment was little different from Kennan's prescription, but it was backed by more power and push than Kennan would have preferred.

Spalding tends to depict Kennan and Truman as polar opposites. She is strongest in her argument that Kennan saw the Cold War as just another episode in a long international history of balance of power politics and had an excessively limited view of American power (soft and hard), weakest in her assertion that he posited "moral equivalence" between the Communist and liberal democratic worlds. Kennan clearly detested Stalinism, but he was a midlevel diplomat trained to deal with the world as it was, not as he would have preferred it to be.

Vision and ideals have to come from the top. Truman had both, and he understood that they had to be expressed as simple truths. A hard, practical politician, he realized that the wider world, as much as his own domestic political universe, was riddled with imperfections that would not disappear overnight. He appears to have arrived at something approaching Reinhold Niebuhr's sense that moral behavior was difficult and ambiguous in an amoral world. Nonetheless, Spalding makes rather too much of his religious faith, which was real but more nominal than it may seem from the perspective of an age in which atheism has become the default religion of the intellectuals and Christianity has been relegated to the status of a cult.

She subjects key texts by both Kennan and Truman to the close analysis reserved for systematic political thought. Neither man, however, was a systematic thinker. In the end Truman's temperament was more important than his intellect, and Kennan never quite grasped the need for a guiding cause in American foreign policy. The differences between them were substantial but less fundamental than the author would have us believe.

It is tempting to argue with this book on many secondary issues, but Elizabeth Edwards Spalding has the one big issue right. It was Harry Truman who defined containment, not George Kennan. And that was a good thing. ♦

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In the Arena

Where the Romans came out to play.

BY CHRISTOPHER MCDONOUGH

Even if you have never been anywhere near it, you feel like Rome's ancient Colosseum is an old friend. And like every tourist attraction, it has a story all its own, which we always vaguely feel is just out of reach. What this story might be is the subject of *The Colosseum* by the late Keith Hopkins and Mary Beard, an idiosyncratic little book that describes the prism through which we view the monument. It is the latest installment in an attractive new series of which Beard is the general editor, Wonders of the World, and in which she wrote the very first book (on the Parthenon). If you are looking for fresh approaches to overdone locales, this is a promising series, and should prove a rich source of gifts for all the travelers, armchair and otherwise, on your list.

The Colosseum
by Keith Hopkins and Mary Beard
Harvard, 224 pp., $19.95

The odd resistance that the Colosseum offers to an "authentic" experience is hardly new. Hopkins and Beard note how Victorian guidebooks urged sightseers to visit the Colosseum on a moonlit night and recite the relevant passages of Byron's "Manfred" to heighten the mood. What a sight that must have been, the old ruin packed with gentlemen in waistcoats and ladies in bustles, all murmuring away from the "Manfreds," which they could only read by moonlight. Such, in fact, was the scene Hawthorne depicted in *The Marble Faun*—writing, a little ruefully, of parties of American and British expatriates, all posing on the parapets, "exalting themselves with raptures that were Byron's, not their own."

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Of his own first encounter, Mark Twain boasted in *The Innocents Abroad*, "I have written about the Coliseum, and the gladiators, the martyrs, and the lions, and yet have never once used the phrase 'butchered to make a Roman holiday.' I am the only free white man of mature age, who has accomplished this since Byron originated the expression." Not that it's a bad expression, of course, and it "sounds well for the first seventeen or eighteen hundred thousand times one sees it in print, but after that it begins to grow tiresome." (Of course, Twain and his friends were in an impish mood by the time they had reached Italy, and they would end up amusing themselves at the expense of the tour guide showing off Christopher Columbus's autograph with this observation: "Why, I have seen boys in America only 14 years old that could write better than that. . . . If you have got any specimens of penmanship of real merit, trot them out!")

Still, Twain's point is hard to deny. To say something new about the Colosseum, just as to see something new in it, is damnably difficult, no matter how much we might sigh with Hawthorne or laugh with Twain about it. Even to see anything old in such a place is a strain on the imagination. The alienation felt at tourist attractions was an issue perceptively raised a half-century ago by Walker Percy. "Why is it almost impossible to gaze directly at the Grand Canyon . . . and see it for what it is?" he asked in his 1954 essay, "The Loss of the Creature." With characteristic insight, he answered:

> It is almost impossible because the Grand Canyon, the thing as it is, has been appropriated by the symbolic complex which has already been formed in the sightseer's mind. …the sightseer measures his satisfaction by the degree to which the canyon conforms to the preformed complex. If it does so, if it looks just like the postcard, he is pleased; he might even say, "Why, it is every bit as beautiful as a picture postcard!"

Much of Hopkins and Beard's book is dedicated to sketching out this "symbolic complex" that surrounds the Colosseum. For 19th-century visitors, the monument was experienced primarily as a ruin, an exotic remnant from a time long ago. In our day and age—thanks to Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*, HBO's *Rome*, and PlayStation 2's "Colosseum: Road To Freedom," themselves all informed by older "sword-and-sandal" flicks—we look at the Colosseum in the present tense, as a place where crowds would cheer on sporting events not unlike our own. Indeed, any number of sports arenas built in the 20th century are called "coliseums" and were deliberately modeled after the ancient prototype. Furthermore, up until the Games in Athens, the façade of the Colosseum always featured on the Olympic medals, although the Games had been Greek and the building was Roman. No matter that the image was historically inaccurate, the International Olympic Committee replied to complaints in 2000, "What's important is that it's a stadium."

A stadium, yes—well, no, it's an amphitheater, but never mind—though the sorts of thing to be seen in it were strictly of the blood sport variety. What can we say with any accuracy of these games and the building that housed them? Those looking for a sober and honest account of what we know will be grateful to Hopkins and Beard, who remind us that the Colosseum was paid for from the booty of the brutal sack of Jerusalem. Not far from the Colosseum stands the Arch of Titus, on which the triumphant Roman soldiers can still be seen carrying off the Menorah. It is no coincidence that Harvard's other recent offering in the Wonders of the World series is *The Temple of Jerusalem*. The

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fates of the Colosseum and the Temple are inextricably linked.

At the Colosseum's grand opening, something like 9,000 animals were killed, and certainly very many gladiators died. What the fighting actually looked like is not entirely clear, of course, though it was surely deadly, and most of the epitaphs we have are of young men. The most obscene things to take place, however, were what the classicist Katherine Coleman has called "fatal charades," in which living tableaux of classical myths were viciously presented. The poet Martial recounts (with admiration for the ingenuity, mind you) how a prisoner had his guts torn out by a bear as a re-enactment of the punishment of Prometheus. This was nothing compared to the woman who was forced to have sex with a bull, in a crowd-pleasing performance of the legend of Pasiphaë, mother of the Minotaur.

This wasn't an entirely new form of entertainment. A decade-and-a-half before we read in Tacitus that Nero needed a scapegoat for the terrible fire which had ravaged the city, and so chose the universally despised Christians as his victims. In the gardens located where St. Peter's now stands, these ancient Christians were dressed in wild animal skins to resemble the ancient hunter Actaeon, who had been transformed into a deer. They were then attacked by dogs and, at nightfall, set on fire while Nero, pretending to be a charioteer, mugged for the audience. Whether the games did anything but satisfy a culture-wide blood thirst is hard to say. What we know comes from fairly scanty evidence: some literary allusions, a number of epitaphs, graffiti from Pompeii, things like that. The image that emerges from these sources depends largely on the tastes of the audience for which the historian is writing.

As a matter of comparison, imagine trying to write a book about Yankee Stadium some two millennia hence, with data consisting only of the script for *Pride of the Yankees*, a handful of baseball cards, and a recording of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." Our 41st-century scholars would have two options: Sift the evidence carefully, separating out the reliable bits of information, to present a collection of careful suggestions—"Just how many players died of diseases named for them is uncertain, although the 'designated hitter rule' seems to have played a part, as did peanuts and Cracker Jacks"—or they could spice up the incomplete picture by making colorful, if unlikely, connections: "Many were the Gehrigs who fell that day, as the bloodthirsty crowd urged on the 'designated hitter' with, 'Root Root Root!'"

Neither of those reconstructions is accurate, of course, nor could they ever hope to be. In similar fashion, what we make of the Colosseum has much to do with what we are allowed to make of it, as Hopkins and Beard indicate. In part, the evidence of antiquity is too slim to provide a comprehensive picture. And then there are those who package it for us: Overly helpful guidebooks, seductively vivid poems and movies, moralizing sermons, boring old classicists. Before we realize it, our mental image of the place has already been drafted according to ideas preprogrammed by Lord Byron, Hollywood, church historians, and others. And then we tailor all of it to get the show we've already decided we want to see.

Cheering crowds? Yes. Moonlight and verses from Byron? Probably not. Delete. Forced sex with a bull? Delete. Deadly competition? Definitely accept. Persecuted religious minorities set on fire? Um—go back to cheering crowds. I'm not sure about the other stuff, but the cheering crowds I like. ♦

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Against Relativism

A British way of looking at neoconservatism.

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Never much admired in the academy, in literary circles, or among fashionable journalists since its emergence in the 1960s and '70s, neoconservatism in the post-9/11 world has, particularly in polite society, come into especially ill repute. For allegedly enabling George W. Bush to drag the nation into a misbegotten and catastrophically harmful war in Iraq, neoconservatives have been subject to relentless vilification. They are cowards, "chickenhawks," who clamor to send other people's children to fight and fall in faraway lands. They are illiberal and antidemocratic followers of Leo Strauss; in accordance with their master's teaching, they dream of, and may be perilously well advanced in establishing, a secret elite to rule the nation and, through the nation's empire, the world. And they flirt with dual loyalty by serving as spear carriers in America for the expansionist policies of Israel's right-wing Likud party.

Neoconservatism
Why We Need It
by Douglas Murray
Encounter, 200 pp., $25.95

Of course, anyone who enters the public square with the intention to influence public opinion must be prepared to endure criticism, unfair as well as fair. If you don't have a thick skin and a strong stomach, you shouldn't join the democratic fray. This is not to say that culpable ignorance, malicious distortion, and vulgar accusation should go unanswered. But in a free society, targets of obloquy confront a choice: They can ignore the vicious among their critics, and so risk allowing the smears to fester in the public's imagination. Or they can risk dignifying the vicious by addressing their charges directly.

Douglas Murray, a young Oxford-educated writer, has chosen the more direct approach. Avid and unabashed, he takes on neoconservatism's harshest critics and does not yield an inch. Indeed, contrary to the many critics who have announced that the neoconservative moment has passed, Murray contends that neoconservatism is just getting started. And the future beckons brightly. In the opening pages, Murray declares his "belief that the solution to many, if not all, of our problems lies in neoconservatism—not just because it provides an optimistic and emboldened conservatism, but because neoconservatism provides a conservatism that is specifically attuned, and attractive, to people today."

His own optimism and boldness, it must be said, sometimes lead him to overstate his case or gloss over difficulties, not least in his estimate of neoconservatism's contemporary appeal. In fact, such appeal is hard to reconcile with the very demonization, springing from the right as well as the left, that has, in significant measure, called forth his efforts on neoconservatism's behalf. Yet one should not be deterred by this and other occasionally exuberant opinions that pop up in Murray's brief, invigorating book. Amid the clutter of calumnies that fill the airwaves, cyberspace, and newsprint, it provides a refreshing introduction to neoconservatism's intellectual origins, leading ideas, and guiding aims.

Murray emphasizes that neoconservatism, being neither a creed nor a school but rather a sensibility and style of thought, has a complex lineage. Sensibly, he chooses to begin his account from the most common misunderstanding, which absurdly traces the U.S. decision to invade Iraq to the teachings of Leo Strauss. It's not that Strauss, a lifelong scholar and teacher of the history of political philosophy, has not been a critical influence in shaping the neoconservative mind. But he did not promulgate a political program or advocate particular policies.

Strauss breathed new life into the idea of a liberal education, which he saw as an opportunity to liberate the mind from prejudices and to expose it to the treasures of human achievement in politics and thought. This liberation involved, among other things, acquiring an understanding of the weaknesses and disadvantages of liberal democracy, the better to grasp the remarkable benefits that liberal democracy confers, the enduring justice of its cause, and the institutions and ideas that sustain it. Murray emphasizes that, among the debilitating prejudices fostered by liberal democracy, was one that Strauss called relativism, and which consisted of the belief that the diversity of human views about right and wrong, and morality and immorality, were rooted in the diversity of cultures, and were all equally valid. Strauss diagnosed relativism as a decayed form of the admirable liberal doctrine of tolerance, and warned that it led to nihilism, or the belief that nothing is true and everything is permitted.

The first generation of neoconservatives—led by Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Patrick Moynihan,

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and Nathan Glazer—entered the 1960s as liberals and Democrats, but rebelled against relativism's political symptoms, finding in the Johnson administration's Great Society welfare programs an inability to draw crucial moral distinctions and an obliviousness to the dependence of free and democratic institutions on character and culture. But by far the biggest and most dangerous expression of the relativist tendency, against which the first generation of neoconservatives rebelled, was the failure to grasp the menace of Communist tyranny and to recognize the monumental stakes of the Cold War.

Neoconservatives, Murray shows, differ from both traditional conservatives—and, to use a term that more accurately than "liberal" describes the left in America today, progressives. In contrast to traditional conservatives, neoconservatives are more comfortable with capitalism, always accepted the moral and political necessity of the welfare state, and consistently sought a prominent role for America in creating a stable and just international order.

In contrast to progressives, neoconservatives are more concerned about the costs of modernity's disruptive ways to the family and traditional morality, strongly doubt the ability of the federal government to improve America through higher taxes and more aggressive social policies, and are skeptical of the integrity and efficacy of the United Nations, while maintaining confidence in the ability of the American armed forces, when diplomacy is exhausted, to advance American interests and ideals.

Although the label neoconservative was originated on the left as a term of reproach, it captures an important truth. In post-1960s America, neoconservatism elaborated a new kind of conservatism, one that made conserving and revitalizing the material and moral preconditions of a free society the top political priority.

Neoconservatism in America today, according to Murray, continues to do battle against relativism, which, he argues, fuels opposition to the global war on terror. To be sure, as Murray points out, there has been no shortage of voices echoing Noam Chomsky's incoherent assertion that U.S. support for Osama bin Laden against the Soviets in the 1980s, and for Saddam Hussein in his war with Iran during the 1980s, should disqualify America from fighting terrorists and the nations that harbor them. And there are plenty, he adds, who, glossing over the U.N.'s sorry record of coddling dictators and failing to prevent bloodshed, argue in the name of cosmopolitanism, democratic humanism, or the international community that Americans who put American interests and American ideals first pose a leading threat to world peace. Yet these criticisms of the war are less an expression of relativism than an expression of poorly reasoned moral disapproval of the United States and its role in the world.

In addition to clarifying the connection between relativism and the resentment, envy, and arrogance that characterize so much progressive criticism of the United States and its fight against Muslim extremism, at least two other critical issues must be addressed to fill out Murray's introduction to neoconservatism. First, what lessons from the neoconservative critique of social engineering at home can be applied to the program for promoting liberty and democracy abroad? And second, what steps can be taken to minimize the tensions involved in seeking to conserve liberal democracy, a doctrine and way of life whose guiding principle—individual freedom—constantly struggles against the constraints of tradition, custom, and authority?

Critics may chuckle with satisfaction at the perplexities neoconservatism confronts. But the price the critics pay is moral and political blindness. Not that neoconservative solutions are always the right solutions. But the perplexities they confront are inscribed in the American way of life. They partly define the challenges of securing liberty at home, which is not separable today (if it ever was) from promoting it abroad. It is not the least of neoconservatism's achievements to have brought these perplexities into focus. ♦

Living Politics

The downward spiral, from Lubell to Witcover.

BY MARK STRICHERZ

Around the time Theodore H. White ended his *Making of the President* series, Jules Witcover emerged as his de facto successor. Witcover wrote big, sprawling books about the modern presidential campaign. By himself, he wrote three dealing with the 1968 presidential race—*The Resurrection of Richard Nixon*; *85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy*; and *The Year the Dream Died*—and one dealing with the 1976 election—*Marathon*. With Jack Germond he cowrote books about every presidential race between 1980 and 1992: *Blue Smoke and Mirrors*, *Wake Us When It's Over*, *Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars?* and *Mad as Hell*. His latest tome, last year's *The Making of an Ink-Stained Wretch*, is a memoir of his time on the presidential campaign trail.

One virtue of Witcover's campaign coverage, as all this suggests, was his indefatigability. Another was his adroit reporting of the "inside baseball" of presidential campaigns. (One of his many scoops was that Harry Dent,

Mark Stricherz is working on a book about how secular, educated elites transformed the Democratic party.

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Samuel Lubell

Bettmann / Corbis

southern coordinator for President Ford's election, played a major role in Ford winning the 1976 Republican nomination, largely by convincing Mississippi's GOP state party chairman, Clarke Reed, to back Ford over Reagan.) In fact, Witcover was in some ways better than White at getting the inside skinny, partly because he was a shrewder judge of character.

Even so, Witcover's series on the American presidential campaign not only doesn't stack up to White's, it also embodies how the whole genre has been corrupted. What happened to this once-great brand? The corruption has not been due to poor writing: Though Witcover's prose begets eyestrain and frequent trips to the bathroom, Walter Shapiro's and Joe Klein's induce chuckles and murmurs of appreciation. Nor has it been due to form. Campaign authors have resorted to most every form imaginable: Journalism-plus-fabulism (*Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* by Hunter S. Thompson), the nonfiction novel (*What It Takes* by Richard Ben Cramer), the fictional novel (*Primary Colors* by Klein), comedic nonfiction (*Trail Fever* by Michael Lewis and *Smashmouth* by Dana Milbank), popular history (*The Last Campaign* by Zachary Karabell), and even the postmodern memoir (Shapiro's *One-Car Caravan*).

No, the corruption of the modern presidential campaign book owes to the content. Campaign authors are in the grip of the Teddy White syndrome: Writing almost entirely about political elites—the candidates, their aides, state and local party workers, even the media. And what they *don't* write about, in depth or really at all, is a rather important actor in democratic elections: voters.

The irony is that, as Nicholas Lemann once pointed out, Teddy White in his *Making of the President* series always wrote a long chapter about the American electorate. Born in 1915, White grew up in Boston in a Jewish ghetto and became a correspondent in China during World War II and in Europe afterwards. White grasped that politics was about more than campaign strategies and tactics: "Politics are only sociology in action," he wrote in a fine epigram that appears in his book on the 1960 campaign. Voters cast ballots for candidates not simply in response to the campaigns, media, and national events; their votes are based also on occupational, religious, regional, class, ethnic, and, of course, racial considerations.

Though a commonplace today, pluralism does not loom large in the journalism and history books of the early 1960s. But it informed some of Whites's most insightful passages. Nowhere was this truer than his portrayal of the citizen-intellectual wing of the Democratic party in 1960. White recognized that, along with the disaffected South, college-educated liberals, whose ranks skyrocketed in the postwar period, were undermining the Roosevelt coalition. White referred to them as "that huge but still stable element of citizen participation, the heritage of the Stevenson years of leadership in the Democratic Party—for Stevenson changed the Democratic Party almost as much as did Franklin D. Roosevelt, by trumpeting to its services scores of thousands of emancipated middle-class Americans who fit into no neat category of occupations, traditions, or pressure blocs."

White's prescience was soon borne out. Antiwar Democrats such as Fred Dutton and George McGovern, both of whom got their start working for Stevenson's presidential bids, used a reform commission created at the 1968 Democratic convention to loosen the party's historic ties with Catholics and working-class whites in exchange for voters from the emerging feminist and youth movements. To be fair, White later failed to link directly the revolt of the citizen-intellectual wing of the party with the breakup of the New Deal coalition. Nevertheless, his books on the 1972 and 1980 campaigns suggest as much. As he wrote in *America In Search of Itself*, "With women, blacks, and other minorities (Hispanics and Jews), the Democrats might, someday, build another coalition—but it would differ from the old Roosevelt alliance."

Although White always included a section in his campaign books on voters, he did so in an impressionistic style, by relying on government statistics and reports rather than interviews with voters. Accordingly, his portraits of the electorate lacked detail, nuance, even dynamism. But their deficiencies were more than those of style and method; they were also ones of content. One can see this by comparing his books with Samuel Lubell's *The Future of American Politics* (1952), which remains the best presidential campaign book ever. (Tom Wolfe, in his Jefferson Lecture last May, spoke of his reaction to Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, the book that examined why Kansas didn't vote for Kerry in 2004: "Had Frank only looked back to Samuel Lubell, he

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would have known why.")

Born in 1911, Lubell had served not only as a foreign correspondent in Asia and Europe, but also as a government aide in World War II, most notably as assistant to Bernard Baruch, drawing up wartime reports and postwar planning. From this latter experience Lubell must have been tempted by the top-down view of democratic politics—government elites make policy and the masses respond. Instead, he embraced a fairly radical bottom-up version. In contrast to White, who wrote about politics mainly from the perspective of political elites, Lubell wrote about it mainly from the point of view of the masses. As he wrote in *The Future of American Politics*, "For every presidential election really is a self portrait of America, a self-portrait with each ballot serving as another brush stroke and through which all the emotions of the American people find expression."

The Future of American Politics is partly about why Harry Truman shocked Thomas Dewey in 1948. Lubell found that Truman owed his victory not to any of his administration's policies. Rather, Truman won because of unexpected support from German Americans who, after having voted against Franklin Roosevelt in 1940 and 1944, returned to the Democratic fold: "Although there were exceptions, Truman's greatest gains generally came in the same German-American counties where Roosevelt suffered his heaviest losses in 1940," Lubell wrote. "Truman made no special appeal to these German-Americans (even after the swing took place, he did not know what happened). Still, German-Americans all over the country shifted together, as if in response to some subconscious instinct." (Truman carried three states with large German populations—Iowa, Wisconsin, and Ohio—that FDR lost four years earlier. Had Truman lost those states, the 1948 election would have been thrown into the House of Representatives.)

The fine brush-stroke quality of *The Future of American Politics* lies primarily in its countless face-to-face interviews Lubell conducted with voters in their neighborhoods. In the case of German Americans, he traveled to Stearns County, Minnesota, home of such famous isolationists as Charles Lindbergh and William Lemke, yielding such gems as the following: "When I asked John Arcenau whether he knew anyone who voted Democratic in 1948 and Republican in 1950, he guffawed. 'Me, I'm one!' and went on, 'I'll never vote Democratic again! Not even if they run a Catholic for President.' 'Why?' 'The war,' he boomed back. 'Democrats always bring wars. If we hadn't gotten into the First World War we wouldn't be in the mess we are in today.'"

Theodore H. White

Associated Press

Witcover, as well as Germond, did write about voters in their books—just not in a meaningful way. They rarely bothered to mention that voters cast ballots on various religious, ethnic, regional, and class considerations, let alone subconscious instinct. Indeed, as two of the original "boys on the bus"—the title of Timothy Crouse's account of the 1972 campaign press corps—they viewed presidential campaigns in a childish sort of way. The contests were portrayed as athletic contests, in the absence of fans. "Covering politics was a game much like sports," Witcover writes in *The Making of an Ink-Stained Wretch*. His other books abound with analogies between politics and baseball games, prizefights, and marathons. Nor were Witcover and Germond alone in their top-down view: Walter Shapiro writes that "presidential politics seems closer in spirit to a sporting contest than a transfer of power that will bequeath the victor globe-girding military and economic authority."

Having contracted the Teddy White syndrome, Witcover and his heirs suffer its main side effect. They are blind to many of the biggest stories about presidential politics in the last three decades. To take one famous example, Witcover and Germond never adequately explained how Republicans rose to majority status: Aside from a few banal conclusions about the disaffection of southern whites, they never explored why millions of Catholics and northern working-class white voters did the same. It could not have surprised them. Their account of the 1988 campaign (*Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars?*) reported that Republicans took a focus group of voters in Paramus, New Jersey, and used their responses to attack Michael Dukakis as soft on crime and unpatriotic.

It might seem odd that recent campaign chroniclers, almost all of whom have been liberal Democrats, embrace a variation of the Great Man theory of history. After all, it's the progressive historians who are supposed to write about The People. But the corruption of the modern presidential campaign book suggests that conservatives had it right all along. Elite journalists aren't all that interested in things like the masses and representative democracy. ♦

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The Byron Image

A post-mortem portrait reveals the sitter.

BY PATRICK J. WALSH

Walking into the Owen Gallery on New York's 75th Street in April 1999, John Clubbe saw a gorgeous portrait of Lord Byron hanging on the gallery wall. It left him utterly astonished. Clubbe stood transfixed, staring at Byron's face. A Byron scholar for 40 years, he knew all the major portraits of the poet but had never seen this one. His perfunctory judgment told him this was the work of some great master. Below the canvas, a card attributed the portrait to Thomas Sully (1783-1872). For the next six years Clubbe sought out the enigma of the portrait and the painter.

George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824) held both Europe and America spellbound during the Romantic age. The Romantics had reacted against Europe's secular materialism and faith in science—or, as Yeats put it, "Newton, Descartes took the world and left us excrement instead." Newton imprisoned man in a world of infinite matter, without beginning or end, while Descartes removed himself from the world of matter, retreating into abstractions of the mind. Both systems alienated man from himself, and from other men; one theory made man a material beast and the other a disembodied intellect.

By contrast, poets approach the total reality and mystery of human existence, and do so with reverence. They know that human beings encounter things through the senses, and that reverence lends itself to love and to a deeper understanding for the mystery of things—a dimension beyond the realm of science. The new scientific method rejected the validity of such poetic knowledge. It also rejected human experience, common sense, and religion. But the Romantics never clearly articulated a refutation of the godless universe of the scientist. Instead of reasoning their way back to sanity by incorporating head and heart, the Romantics tended to deny reason, postulating feeling instead. They turned inward on themselves. In "Don Juan," Byron defied the modern, de-rationalized world with aristocratic disdain:

When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,'
And proved it—'t was no matter what he said:
They say his system 't is in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

With no deep religious belief to sustain them, the Romantic poets became disconsolate chimeras, searching for some abiding spiritual truth. Byron desired a place of refuge from the dominant secular order of science, rising commerce, and material innovation—"Inventions that help man as true / As shooting them at Waterloo"—and denied fealty to such a world. Byron, Shelley, and Keats drifted to Rome, which Shelley renamed "a paradise of exiles."

For several decades after the fall of Napoleon, the Romantics shaded and colored the daydreams of young Europeans and Americans. Byron had sought an escape from despair in sexual escapades, but experience brought him only despondency. He thought marriage would tame him, yet his marriage dissolved in less than a year. Rumors of mistreating his wife soon hounded him out of England, and in 1816, he left never to return. Sorely out of humor with the world, he defied it by further asserting his wit, his ego, and his fearsome pride.

In exile, Byron would have nothing to do with the English, who peered at him from a distance through telescopes. But he had a fondness for Americans: "Americans are the only people whom I never refuse to show myself. The Yankees are great friends of mine." Commodore Jacob Jones invited him aboard the USS *Constitution* for an official visit as it lay in

Thomas Sully's Lord Byron

Private Collection, USA

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anchor off Leghorn in 1822. George Bancroft, the American historian who was also a guest on board that day, wrote that "finding all on board to be Americans, Lord Byron's manners became easy, frank and cheerful." Touring another American ship Byron was pleased to find a New York edition of his poems.

(Not only was Byron pleased by American frigates, he was also impressed by American writers, particularly Washington Irving. Once, hoping to find a copy of Irving's latest work in a trunk sent from England, Byron rummaged in vain. Upon finding a volume of Jeremy Bentham instead, he hurled it across the room.)

As Byron revitalized poetry in his time, so Thomas Sully "introduced into American portraiture a Romantic sensibility, a livelier palette, a heightened energy and flair, a sense of drama," as John Clubbe writes in *Byron, Sully, and the Power of Portraiture*. Most Americans know Sully from his handsome portrait of Andrew Jackson that adorns the $20 bill, but Clubbe points out that many of Sully's works are inaccessible to the public. Sully's paintings possess a power that captures the "dramatic individuality" of the person. James Fenimore Cooper, a Federalist and no friend of Thomas Jefferson, was overcome with emotion when he viewed Sully's portrait of Jefferson at West Point. Sully spent 60 years of his life in Philadelphia, first settling there in 1810. Born in England, he came to America as a child, and studied in England under Benjamin West and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Byron appeared to be settling down in Italy with the beautiful young Countess Teresa Guiccioli. (During their lovemaking she sometimes paused to make the sign of the cross when she heard church bells ringing.) Yet he remained restless. In 1822 Shelley drowned off the coast of Italy; in 1823 Byron's daughter Allegra died of a fever. At age 36 Byron thought his "days in the yellow leaf / The flowers and fruits of love are gone / The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone." He soon sailed for Greece, dying there on April 19, 1824, during the war for Greek independence. Byron's death on the anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord made him all the more popular in America.

Thomas Sully always had a great interest in Byron, and his portrait was not done *ad vivam* ("from life"). He studied all of Byron's portraits, gathering information for years from other painters and from the poet's close friends, and chose the profile pose Byron struck for Richard Westall in 1813. Byron insisted on profiles because one eye was bigger than the other, and of a slightly different color. (While the poet was sensitive about this feature, others found it striking.) Compared with Sully's, Westall's portrait is self-absorbed and English, a kind of weak tea with too much milk and sugar. But Byron, it should be noted, was more Scottish than English, and Sully's portrait captures Byron's Scottish essence. It is more engaging, confident and full of life, ruddy and redolent of Scottish good looks, stiff breezes, and blasts of whiskey.

John Clubbe has brought to light an American masterpiece that had been virtually unknown—"never exhibited, never engraved and never discussed by scholars of Sully or of Byron." Now we have an epic portrait to go with Byron's epic masterpiece, "Don Juan."

There is no greater summary of Byron or of "Don Juan" than the critic Paul Elmer More's: "Out of the bitterness of his soul, out of the wreck of his passions which though heroic in intensity had ended in quailing of the heart, he had sought what the great makers of epic had sought—a solace and a sense of uplifted freedom. The heroic ideal was gone, the refuge of religion was gone; but passing to the opposite extreme, by showing the power of the human heart to mock at all things, he would still set forth the possibility of standing alone and apart from all things. He too went beyond the limits of destiny by laughter as Homer and Virgil and Milton had risen by the imagination and in doing this, he wrote the modern epic." ♦

'Sun-Dappled Dread'

A suburban drama and the evil of banality.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Two movies opened on September 30, a slash-gorefest called *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* and an art-house production entitled *Little Children* with a prestigious cast led through its paces by an Oscar-nominated writer-director. One of these movies is so upsetting, unsettling, and unnerving that pharmaceutical companies should set up tables at the conclusion of the picture and distribute free samples of Xanax and Klonopin to calm and soothe the nerves of the audience. And it's not *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Little Children
Directed by Todd Field

Little Children begins as a mild suburban satire, turns into a trenchant study of marital discontent, bursts into full-blown romantic melodrama, and then reaches its climax as a series of calamities threaten to befall every single person we've been watching for two hours. The opening scene's knowing portrait of censorious stay-at-home moms competing in the playground for the attention of a good-looking stay-at-home father quickly gives way

John Podhoretz is THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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New Line Productions

Kate Winslet, Patrick Wilson

to scenes of husbands addicted to Internet porn, an inadvertently emasculating wife denying her spouse his subscription to *Sports Illustrated*, and a convicted child molester clearing out a crowded community swimming pool when he arrives with flippers and goggles.

The movie begins to create a most unusual mood—what might be called "sun-dappled dread." The sound of a commuter train's whistle eventually becomes *Little Children*'s version of the shrieking violins from *Psycho*. By the time its last ten minutes rolled around, I literally found myself watching *Little Children* with my hands over my eyes as various characters converged in the middle of the night on the little playground where the movie began two hours earlier in brilliant morning light. I did not drop my hands until the end titles appeared.

Little Children is based on the sly comic novel published in 2004 by Tom Perrotta. But even though Perrotta is credited as the screenplay's co-author, *Little Children* abandons Perrotta's fascinating blend of sarcasm and sweetness and instead treats his characters as though they are amoebas under a microscope being studied with Olympian detachment by a particularly cold-eyed scientist. And what the scientist sees is not pleasing to him.

The movie is the second directorial effort by Todd Field, a onetime journeyman actor whose last major part came seven years ago in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. There's a lot of disgruntled talk in film criticism circles that Field's movie owes a great debt to Kubrick, but the plain truth is that Field is a far better and more accomplished director. A comparison between *Eyes Wide Shut* and *Little Children* is instructive. Both are studies of marital anxiety and the potential cost of infidelity. But where *Eyes Wide Shut* is hysterical and risible, *Little Children* is precise and haunting. At no moment in *Eyes Wide Shut* does a single character do anything a member of the audience might do. At every moment in *Little Children*, characters are making exactly the kinds of mistakes and engaging in exactly the kind of self-destructive behavior that bedevil ordinary people every day.

Field doesn't let his characters off the hook. He has little patience for them. They are really the "little children" of the title, playacting at being adults. Brad, the stay-at-home dad, has failed the bar exam twice and has to take it a third time, but instead of studying at night goes and watches teenage skateboarders in desperate hopes that they will invite him to join them. Brad's wife Kathy keeps him at a safe distance by insisting they let their young son sleep between them every night. Sarah, the woman with whom Brad has an affair, is so absorbed in her own life's drama that she cannot spare a minute to notice her three-year-old daughter has spent the day making her a picture frame. Rather than take care of his wife and their children, Brad's friend Larry spends his nights spray-painting the word "EVIL" on the sidewalk in front of the house owned by the naive mother of the child molester.

Brad wants to be a boy. Kathy doesn't want to be a wife. Sarah doesn't want to be a mother. Her spouse, Richard, doesn't want to be a husband, and Larry doesn't want to be a father. And yet here they all are, in a nice, leafy suburb, making a big mess.

The acting is impeccable, especially the indelibly creepy and strangely touching performance by onetime child star Jackie Earle Haley as Ronnie the child molester. Like Ronnie, *Little Children* is impossible to like but impossible to shake. ♦

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The field of scientific research in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea successfully conducted an underground nuclear test under secure conditions on October 9, 2006, at a stirring time when all the people of the country are making a great leap forward in the building of a great, prosperous, powerful socialist nation. . . . The nuclear test was conducted with indigenous wisdom and technology 100 percent. It marks a historic event as it greatly encouraged and pleased the Korean People's Army and people that have wished to have powerful self-reliant defense capability.

—Korean Central News Agency press release, Oct. 9, 2006

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

October 10, 2006

Statement by the Hon. Maurice L. Snodgrass Jr.,
Deputy Assistant Under Secretary of State
for Public Communications and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Administration

In order to effectuate a deeper and more comprehensible understanding of the circumstances surrounding the aforementioned events, the Government of the great, prosperous, powerful, capitalist United States, in 100 percent consultation with our Allies and other indigenous parties, including those with responsibility for powerful self-reliant defense capabilities, has immediately undertaken to receive *via* appropriate channels of communication, reliable intelligence reports to the effect that one or possibly multiple nuclear devices have been detonated with 100 percent wisdom and technology within the geographical confines of the Korean Peninsula (see terms of armistice, DOS 188-37 [1953]), in direct, flagrant, and stirring contravention *ad seriatem* of bilateral undertakings, both written and oral, between the Government of the great, prosperous, powerful capitalist United States and encouraged and pleased representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter DPRK). While initial intelligenciary evidence suggests, under prior and existing obligations, that these single or multiple detonations *in situ* have been shown to be of a demonstrable and testicular nature, and not aggressive or threatulatory in intent (see USC 22:9c, sec. 7.6), there is nevertheless 100 percent cause for a great leap forward into multilateral consultations under the DOS administrative modality for expressions of indigenous concern and referral to relevant federal agencies and the Office of the Inspector General, as well as consideration of United Nations initiative

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